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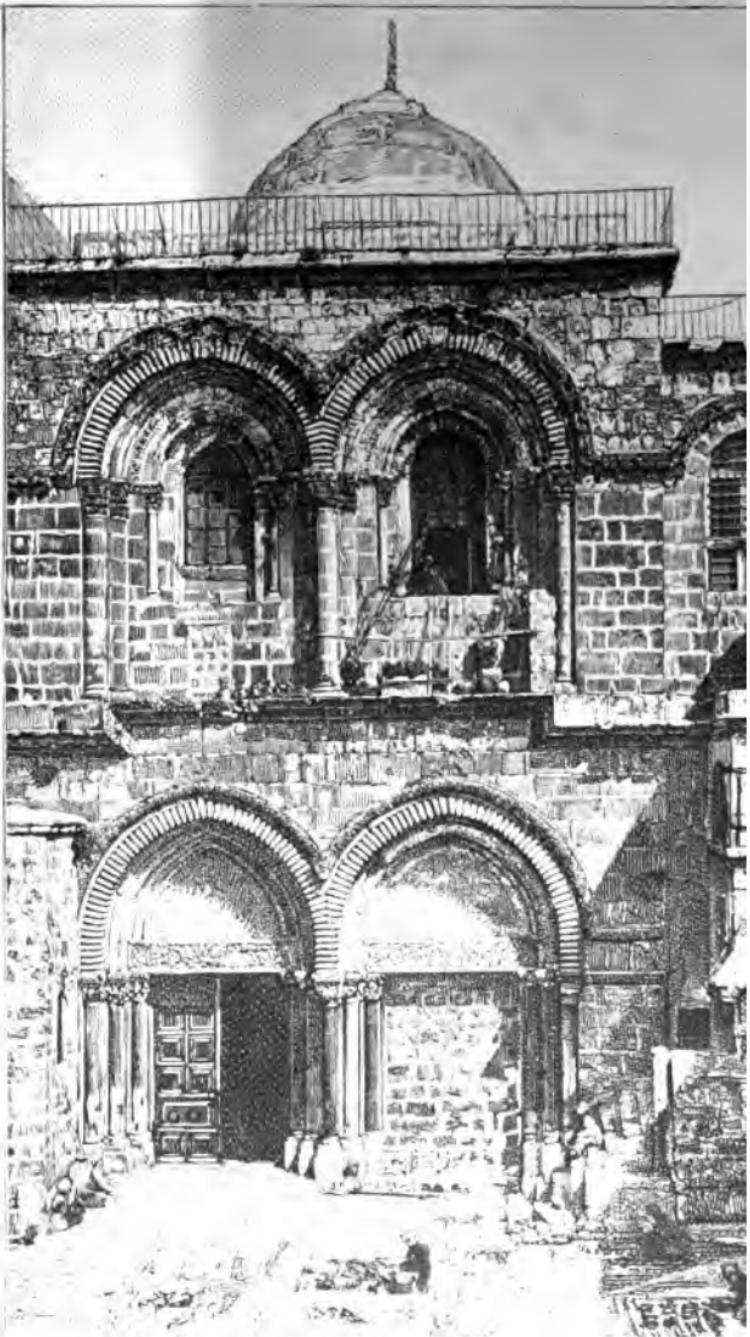












# JERUSALEM

THE HOLY CITY

ITS HISTORY AND HOPE

BY

MRS. OLIPHANT

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**TO MY**

**DEAR CHILDREN AND COMPANIONS**



## NOTE.

THE writer scarcely needs to say that this book is no record of Eastern travel: her experiences in the Holy Land having no special importance, save as making more vivid to herself the scenes to which the



## INTRODUCTION.

THE story of Jerusalem is one of the most wonderful  
in the world, besides being of unparalleled impor-  
tance to the human race. Insignificant in power even

tories of living men. A learned sect studies and scrutinises with painful confusion of images what a great Rameses may or may not have done: but the child of to-day wants no better entertainment than that story of Joseph and his brethren which is told in every language and never fails to touch the simple heart. Before Homer had begun his primitive minstrel strain to celebrate the fights and wiles of the chiefs and kings, Isaiah had risen to the highest heights of poetry, had opened the great dim gates of Hades, and had revealed, on the other hand, a dazzling glimpse of a Heaven in which one God sat upon a throne of light, and judged and tried the spirits of men. There is no such record in all the histories. The psalms which began with David, breathe forth the deepest emotions of our race to-day. The wisdom which throughout all the tenacious East bears the name of Solomon, has never been outpassed by any successor. And when we descend the course of the ages and come to a still more glorious and wonderful history, it is Jerusalem still which is the scene both of tragedy and triumph, of the greatest and most wonderful life which was ever

## INTRODUCTION.

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forms the sole standing-ground for this demand. Very few people know the Hebrew language, or are able to test these assertions, except by such light of ordinary criticism as they may happen to possess, by the laws of literature and the force of nature; but I think that few, comparatively, will be tempted to transfer a faith, in which they have been trained from their childhood, to a small group of unknown persons, whose motives are dubious, and their methods more ingenious than ingenuous; and to reject on their authority, as a series of often fraudulent fables, the history so full of nature, so instinct with every feeling of humanity, which has been the food of our imagination and the inspiration of our thought.<sup>an</sup>"

## INTRODUCTION.

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- have private intelligence on the subject, if not that the different editions, "redactions," of which he discourses so glibly, must have been entered at some ancient Stationers' Hall, of which the register has fallen into his hands. M. Renan tells us cheerfully that no such person as Abraham ever existed, and that on another page of his own book (*Le Peuple d'Israel*) there will be found "*des données plus solides*" upon this imaginary personage. But when we turn, somewhat anxiously, to that previous page, we find nothing but the statement of M. Renan, unsupported even by any suggestion of proof — a statement which seems to me the least solid of all foundations of belief. That he is also certain that Davi'

**INTRODUCTION.**

their country while occupied with smaller matters, such as inventing instruments of music, like David. The reader will judge whether his faith in Abraham or in David—men whom he has known from his youth up, of whom he has in his hands the unvarnished record, in which there is naught extenuate, but everything good and bad impartially set down—is shaken by such assertions....

## INTRODUCTION.

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everything they do is done with the distinct motive of proving their own negative. M. Renan rejoices, as the accomplished end of their inquiries, that every one is now able to form his own romance about the origin of religion, it being clearly proved that no religion has any supernatural origin, and that God, if there is a God, never spoke to man at all. In what then can the unlearned take refuge? In proofs like those quoted above? in the disintegration of a consistent and living record? My own conclusion is very simple. I will take Herr Wellhausen's word for nothing, above all for nothing on which he has formed his theory before he began to inquire into the subject. I will take M. Renan's word for less than

him those works by which he is most chiefly known, I am unable to conceive. The use of criticism may justifiably come in to examine and judge, according to the differing style and references of the Psalms, which may be most surely attributed to David, and which to later writers. This commends itself to reason. I do not think the other does so, especially as I find nothing but mere sweeping denial of a fact which rests not only upon the assertion of the only existing witnesses, but on the unbroken tradition of a people whose records are avowedly the most ancient and the most continuous of all nations on the earth. I believe it has been quite impossible (in a very much less important matter) to come to any certain conclusion in respect, for example, to the so-called poems of Ossian, a publication of this century, of avowedly modern redaction. Are they genuine? are they not so? It is difficult to believe that any natural and genuine bard ever uttered anything so inflated and artificial: yet it is equally impossible to deny that there is foundation in the floating traditions of the Highlands for much that was published by Maeperson. Thus, in a question of our own age, with all the materials within our reach, no absolute certainty has ever been attained, notwithstanding that the internal evidence is against those high-flown strains. But in the case of the Psalms of David, the internal evidence is all in favour of the identity of the poet. They are not high-flown; they are the voice of a natural man of high genius and strong emotions in the very circumstances in which David is allowed to have been placed. So natural are they, utterances so true of the troubled or the thoughtful mind in the midst of the struggles of life, that our deepest emotions find expression in them to-day. What object, then, can there be in seeking the truth another author? The

## INTRODUCTION.

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suffered with him, rejoiced with him, if it is not himself who thus pours forth his heart, in the fields of Bethlehem, under the great stars almost projected out of heaven in their grandeur—or in the high places of Israel, and the gates through which, with songs and rejoicing, he carried the Ark of the Lord. Who is it? what closest comrade? what dearest friend? what all-devoted poet? if it is not David, the sinner and sorrowful, the man of passion and strife, of penitence and confession, the man we know? To another man whom I do not know, whom no one ventures to name, I will not transfer the songs that have been sung as his for three thousand years, the first strains of divine poetry ever revealed to mine ear.



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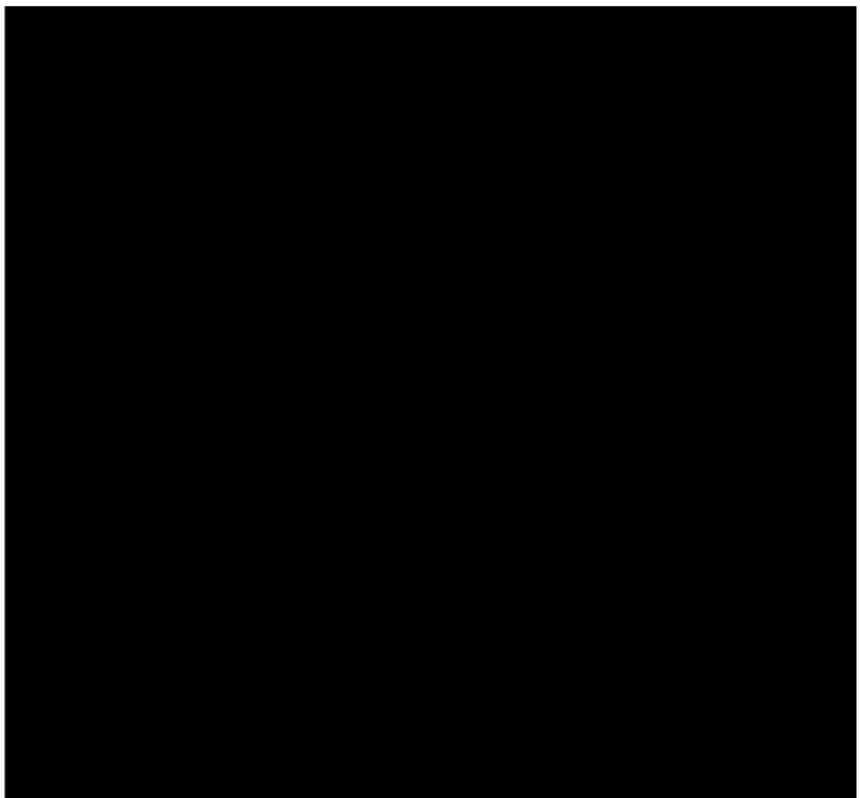
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**PART I.—THE HOUSE OF DAVID.<sup>1</sup>**

**CHAPTER I.**



king, and united, after civil war and many disturbances, the whole nation of Israel under one head, something in the form of a capital, or centre of royal authority, from whence laws might proceed, and where government should dwell, must have become necessary. David was at this time living in Hebron, at the farther end of his kingdom, a place with no claim either to central position or special strength. Saul, his predecessor, had, it would appear, entertained no idea of royal state or central authority. He was a man of war, and no statesman; the experiment of kingship was new, against all the previous ideas of the tribes: and the first king, in his confused and troubled intelligence, and life of excitement, warfare, and mistake, had little time for those ideas of consolidation and permanent establishment which are necessary for the maintenance of authority and government. We are not told in what way David was directed towards the little stronghold of the Jebusites as the site of his throne. It would seem to have been his own personal choice, not indicated to him by any oracle. He must have been acquainted with it in his youth, must have skirted the hill on which it stood many times in the course of his early wanderings and dangers; and lover of Nature, and of all things beautiful as he was, no doubt the little city set on a hill, always so charming an object, as well as the more practical recommendation of those steep slopes and ridges of rock almost impregnable to the efforts of early warfare, must have caught his dreaming eyes on many occasions long before he was conscious that one day or another he should there found

green but rocky hill which lay opposite the Jebusite city, it must have been faint and dim, especially as, at that time, when places of sacrifice were many, and every famous inhabitant had somewhere built an altar, even so great and memorable a sacrifice as that of Abraham's would scarcely bear the importance which has attached to it in later days. We have no reason to suppose that the young warrior had as yet conceived the great idea of a temple to be placed upon that twin hill, and the double strength of altar and throne to be thus given to the capital of his kingdom. But the Jebusite city at once pleased his eye and satisfied his mind as adapted for his purpose.

the townsmen could keep out the victorious bands of Judah. The city was taken, the fortress, high upon the western height, and all the low square and windowless hovels which hung about it. In all probability there has been little change since then in the strange little dark dwellings which Arabs and Syrians still inhabit in our own days, and which are rather shelters from the sun by day and the dew by night for a people whose life is chiefly spent in the open air, than dwellings such as we understand. Many a hillside throughout Palestine still shows around the one point of distinction, the fort or mosque which is its centre, those level lines, square and low, with openings of wide doorways and flat roofs of mingled clay and straw, or something less savoury still, which are the houses natural to the soil, often expanding into chambers darker, yet cooler still, wrought out in the rock below or behind.

Such, no doubt, was the city which David took, and which he made into the city of David, the stronghold of Zion, a city which has had more influence on the world than any other on the face of the earth. Great has been the power of Athens, great that of imperial Rome; but from Jerusalem has come an inspiration more lofty, an influence more continuous than either. The springs of life which rose within that rocky enclosure flow yet through all the world — through all our world it would perhaps be more just to say, seeing that as yet the far-distant East has been little influenced by them; though it would be indeed a mistake to assert that the creed of Mahomet was unconnected with that potent fountain-head from which it has derived almost all that is worthy in it. In the meantime, however, our object is more limited than to discuss the influence which that little city has exerted over the world; we have to do with

history, and that of the Eastern hero and warrior, the shepherd, the poet, the feudatory chieftain, the king of Israel, who first made for it an everlasting name.

David, the son of Jesse, of the tribe of Judah and the town of Bethlehem or Ephrath—the latter being the ancient name of the time of the patriarchs—was the youngest of a large family possessing land and some importance in the district, which was one of much agricultural and pastoral wealth. The soft slopes on which

farther slopes and edge of the valley. Though Jesse was a substantial man, rich enough to send supplies to his sons with the army, and offerings to propitiate their captain, his household, like all families of the time, was fully occupied by the care of the family property and possessions, on a footing very little different from that of the servants born in the house, who were a sort of humble brethren and counted among its children. David was the shepherd-boy, the lowest and least skilled of the brothers in those early days, when Samuel, the old prophet from Ramah, paid a visit to their city, and honoured the house of Jesse by choosing it for his resting-place. The public reason for this visit was to offer a sacrifice, an object apparently accepted as natural and just by the elders of the town; but Samuel's chief motive and interest was in his review of the sons of Jesse, seven young men of fine stature and good looks, any one of whom appeared to the prophet fit for the divine choice; but not among them was the chosen of the Lord.

The youngest was absent, keeping the sheep—a boy of no particular account in the presence of the firstborn and his stalwart brethren, yet a beautiful lad, ruddy and fresh as the dews of the morning, as are still the handsome and gentle race which inhabit Bethlehem. In the leisure of his occupation—the most thoughtful and poetical of all rural pursuits—no doubt this youth had begun to feel the rising of the poet's passion, the elation and inspiration of that gift which more than any other lifts up the heart. The light that never was on sea or shore lit up for him the beloved valley, the encircling hills. He had already seen in his waking dreams, in the early light, the sun, all radiant in triumph and glory, come forth like a bridegroom from his chamber, and had even then known that he was destined to be a partaker of such

silently proclaiming the praises of the Lord. All these natural sounds and sights had entered into his heart, which was full of that tender piety of youth not always maintained in maturer life, which is one of the most beautiful aspects of humanity. That he also possessed great courage and strength is evident from the statement of his struggle with the lion and the bear in defence of his flocks. But great as was the promise of his early years, young David, amid the members of the household, was but the junior—a youth unacquainted with the world and its fiercer enjoyments of battle and raid, at the time of the old prophet's visit. How it was that the anointing of David, which was Samuel's special mission

nimble youths that ran by the old man's side as he ambled upon his mule along the narrow paths between the fields, as still the young attendants run, to anticipate any wish of the great man they escort and accompany, to lead his beast over the hard places of the way, and render him that reverential homage which is never so perfect as in the East. And then the soft landscape, the young shepherd-lad disappear from our vision for a time, and the prophet goes his way to the disappointments that awaited him—the endless chidings and heart-burnings which attended the troubled path of Saul.

“ Yea, though I walk in death’s dark vale,  
Yet will I fear none ill :  
For Thou art with me ; and Thy rod  
And staff me comfort still.  
My table Thou hast furnished  
In presence of my foes ;  
My head Thou dost with oil anoint,  
And my cup overflows.

‘ Goodness and mercy all my life  
Shall surely follow me :  
And in God’s house for evermore  
My dwelling-place shall be.’”

Another picture never to be obliterated came into his  
dreaming soul when he sat by night, with that great  
~~Eastern heaven stretched out above him—the calm~~

Thus he sat and sang his happy songs in the pleasant valley and upon the fragrant hill, with the low line of the roofs of Bethlehem, and the distant enclosure of his father's house shining under the broad radiance of that Eastern moon, and all manner of great thoughts swelling in his youthful bosom, ambitions perhaps—the vague ecstasy of those visions of distinction and fame, and of making a great name, which are common to the dreaming boy, whether in the east or in the west, in ancient ages or at this day. **H**e who invented instruments of music in his latter days, and took so much pains with the choirs and anthems of the national worship, we may be sure had made himself some shepherd's pipe upon which to play, more melodious, let us hope, than the doleful Arab pipe which sounds upon those slopes in the present age. In that same valley, so full of associations, Ruth, the young widow from the land of Moab, whose name has become a symbol of faithful affection, gleaned "among the alien corn," and won the heart of the rich landowner Boaz; and in an age scarcely then forgotten Rahab, another foreign woman of less creditable antecedents but equal faith, came up from the deep banks of the Jordan into this fertile and tranquil place, and found, we may be permitted to suppose, in the house of one of the men whose lives she had saved at Jericho, a home and refuge. The blood of both these women ran in the veins of Jesse's son. He was thus of kin to other races, with a mingling in him of foreign instincts, and perhaps had inherited tastes and dreams of beauty and luxury unknown to the desert-wanderers of Israel from the older civilisation of the rich Jericho and the cities of Moab. But chief of all, he had the blood of the conquerors in his veins, the tradition of those victorious bands who had overrun the rich country, and ruled one by one the little monarchies of the land.

while he fulfilled his youthful occupation about the pleasant hills. An English youth with perhaps a Spanish grandmother, with the tradition of some dazzling beauty from the East among his progenitors, might thus feel himself the inheritor of all the races, mingling the romance of his foreign ancestresses with the masterful confidence of the Englishmen who have conquered and assimilated all these alien glories. And David, in the fair country in which he was born, must have felt the thrill of the stranger inspiration, the poetry of the beautiful women thus made to contribute to the perfection of his race. I have heard a hot theorist deny the proposition disagreeable to him, that our Lord Himself, according to the flesh,

pendent of chronology ; yet this must have occurred

here and there, and slopes of pastureland, David had come eager and expectant from Bethlehem, with his burden of parched corn for his brothers, and home-made cheeses for a present to their captain ; and one of the first things that attracted him, eager for every sign of battle, would be the sight at which the two armies were looking on, and which interrupted every movement. Between the opposing hosts upon the bank of the stream, in sight of both, strode forth the swashbuckler, Goliath, daring the armies of Israel, a big man, blazing in his rich armour under the sun, with the huge spear in his hand which has been part of the equipment of so many giants since his time. There are few things more apt to be exa-

David made no more reply than any other young hero made light of among his kindred. He took his way into some other indifferent group, indifferent to himself, wholly occupied with the brag of the Philistine and the humiliation of having no man among them who would venture to meet him: and listened to every word that was said. Great promotion and honour, the king's daughter to be his wife, a place unequalled among the host which stood there overawed at the sight of the bully. It is too early an age for love-stories, or it might be imagined that David had already raised his eyes, as to one altogether out of his reach, to the daughter of Saul, the sister of Jonathan who loved him. But it must be remembered also that love had already begun to bear a part in the history of the Hebrews, which no other ancient history has allowed. Jacob, that man of riches and rapacity, true parent of the grasping Jew of modern times, had loved his Rachel like any Christian knight, transmitting thus from the very dawn of human records an absolute romance such as never entered into the thoughts of any graceful Greek. But it would be trivial and unnecessary to bring in such a notion to the story here. David had evidently everything to gain, had there been no Michal in the case: the opportunity first of all of distinguishing himself, of vindicating his nation, of beating down the pride of the oppressor — objects enough, any one of them, to set a greater's spirit on fire, not to speak of the still deeper impulse of a high indignation against the heathen brigand who dared to set himself up in his brute strength against the living God. David in his after years was far from being a blameless man, as everybody knows. He fell under the temptations and abused the privileges of power, and his conduct in the case of Bathsheba is well known.

the heavens the work of God's hands, and where, in the fervour of his youth he had felt himself to be the object of a heavenly care and love more deep than his own devotion to the few sheep in the wilderness, which yet he had guarded at risk of his life—the passion of his young soul for the honour of the God of Israel, the living God, the Lord who needed not that His champion should bear sword or spear, was as a fire in his heart. Something of the absolute trust which is more easy to youth than to any other period of life, an almost bragadocio of self-abnegation, generous scorn of all precaution, the confidence not so much of a hero as of a child,

retreating army.<sup>1</sup> "The men of Israel and Judah arose

fall. In the same way Saul, fallen from his high estate, cast down to the very depths of that excitable and sensitive nature which made him so subject to all external influences, makes the heart of the reader ache with pity : and but for the wild chivalry and generosity which soon show themselves in David, would draw away our sympathies altogether in his forlorn and heaven-abandoned kinghood, in his wild impetuous hastiness and the mistakes of his desperation, from that young and applauded hero, of whom it is said that all he did pleased the people. David, however, escapes that unpleasing contrast of the prosperous with the unfortunate by the quickly following romances of his story. To the very

hearts of men, and one cannot but wonder how the commentators, whose criticisms are supposed to destroy the consistency of these records, making of them a mass of disjointed scraps put together to serve certain purposes of statecraft by various hands at various times, have been able to free themselves from the charm and spell of human sympathy which is in these marvellous narratives. Two more distinct human creatures than Saul and David never existed, nor can we imagine a story more deeply moving, more tragically true to nature. The great warrior, now fading from the glory of his youth, never a man of judgment, hasty, passionate, mistaken, unable to learn the self-command and obey the restraints that hem about the footsteps of a ruler, yet full of a certain primitive greatness, standing high above the mass of ordinary men, both in the heyday of his valour and the tragedy of his despair; and modest in his presence, reverent of his office, yet perhaps scarcely capable of keeping out of his thoughts the peans of the admiring Israelites, the consciousness already of knowing better and of being more capable of rule—the younger hero, more engaging, more attractive than the moody and excitable Saul could ever have been, a man to steal the hearts of all who came near him, young, fortunate, full of charm. David made no mistakes in the difficult positions—almost a son of the house, deeply beloved by some of its chief members, yet hated and feared by its head; whereas Saul's career had been full of mistakes, and he had never been able to find the medium between hasty oversobriety and wilful transgression of the commandment. He must have seen that Jonathan, with his heart completely stolen by that interloper, would strike no blow and make no stand for the

called forth, as such menials do, a certain tribute of easy praise, to whom the eyes of all men were turning. To David the Ephrathite, the son of Jesse—to him who had been nobody till the other day, and was nobody save as the king's favour made him! It is but too easy to understand the exasperation, the keen sense as of a useless struggle, yet fierce determination to get rid of and overthrow this disturber of his life, which was in the mind of Saul.

And how full of life and nature is the whole scene: the consultations of the younger members of the household who love him with the persecuted and threatened

David, the troubled talk, and agonies of the family.

convinced of the deadly peril in which he stood, and not knowing where to find refuge. To go home to Bethlehem does not seem to have occurred to him. Probably he was not assured of any welcome there if he arrived suddenly, a fugitive from the wrath of the king; perhaps even more likely, for his father and mother were still living who could not have refused him a shelter, he was afraid to draw upon his kindred the anger and vengeance of Saul. But more near than Bethlehem, more secure than any common house, there was the old prophet at Ramah to appeal to, he who had shown so much kindness to David, who had refused to allow the feast to begin till the shepherd-boy had been called, and who had kissed and anointed the ruddy lad fresh from the fields, as he had not done to Eliab or any of the stalwart brethren. Though I think it is quite clear that David did not know what that anointing meant, yet it was a token of favour; and as he cast about in his mind where to turn for succour the recollection of Samuel must have flashed across his thoughts like a sudden light.

Nothing more wild and strange than the description of his temporary shelter with the old prophet could be. Samuel would seem to have taken the fugitive to some more secure refuge than his own open house in Ramah where for years he had judged Israel, and which would naturally be accessible on all sides to those who came to consult him, and bring their difficulties to be solved. It was to "Naoth in Ramah," "the house of learning," that he transferred himself and his guest, no doubt some secluded school of the prophets, where special instruction and training might be given to those who were to instruct the people. "The company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over

was probably what we should call the college of the consecrated Levite youths, studying their future functions under the superintendence of the deeply experienced and highly gifted old man, who had served God from his infancy, and was the acknowledged head of all sacred science in Israel. That this instruction, however, was accompanied by ecstatic manifestations now coming upon one, now upon another, would seem to be implied in the strange narratives that follow. The messengers, men of the sword, soldiers of Saul's irregular and lately formed army, came suddenly, unaware, we may suppose, of what they were about to see, thinking only of their fierce commission, into the midst of this wonderful scene; an

of God's people: and now what was this erring and

forbid," said the generous young man, trying even now to defend both father and friend. "It is not so; my father will do nothing great or small without letting me know: and why should he hide this from me?" It would appear from these words that Jonathan had not been aware of that expedition to Ramah. A touching arrangement was then made between the two young men. It was close to the time of the new moon, when Saul and all great men made feasts for their households, and where David's place would naturally be an important one, both as the king's son-in-law, and as one of the great warriors and captains of Israel. Jonathan consented to make an excuse for David's absence on this occasion, and thus

advisable to make no further show of his hostility to David, who was one of the props of his throne: and prepared as usual for the feast of the new moon, himself presiding, seated “as at other times upon a seat by the wall,” the head of the primitive table, with Abner by his side, his commander-in-chief. For the first day he took no notice of David’s vacant place; but on the second demanded an explanation. “Why does not the son of Jesse come to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day?” Upon this question, Jonathan made the excuse that had been agreed upon. There was a feast of the family at Bethlehem, and David’s brother—which looks as if Eliab was now head of the family, perhaps acting so on account of the age and weakness of Jesse, for there is still mention of the father later on—had commanded him to be present. Upon this Saul burst forth into fury upbraiding the folly of his son. “Do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion?” he cried. It was not David, not the familiar name of the household, the name too famous in Israel, which the angry king employed, but that of the alien house, the opposed clan, a name of Judah which had always assumed to be the first in Israel. “As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom,” exclaims the king, with a feeling more honourable than that of his own fierce enmity. And there can be little doubt that Jonathan himself had a prevision of this since he had already appealed to the time when David’s enemies should be cut off every one from the face of the earth, and commended his own race and house to the protection of the hunted and persecuted man. Yet he stood with all the

transport of his anger and disappointment and fierce incapacity to bear opposition, snatched a javelin from the wall behind him, and flung it at his son, as he had before done at the object of their quarrel. It became evident that no more was to be said, nor the name of David named again in that primitive court, where it would appear no voice was raised for the ambitious young captain but that of the heir alone.

The reader's heart goes with Jonathan, as so often in these records. Saul and David are the chief figures in the struggle, one with the painful crown of tragedy, the other the laurels and the paens of success. But between them stands the noble young man, fated to share the so-

tion is one that calls forth every sympathy and makes of this pure and chivalrous figure the highest light in the wonderful picture. Jonathan went forth sad and angry, with that wrath of love that "works like madness in the brain," as soon as the morning dawned after this troublous scene, and took down his bow from the wall, and called a boy from among the many retainers to go with him, striding forth with a clouded brow, as all would understand, to divert his troubled mind with a favourite exercise. "The field" in which these meetings took place must have been some sheltered spot, some hollow on the other side of the hill, where there were rocks and caves, such as abound everywhere in Palestine, in which a fugitive could be hid; for it would seem that all this time David had been lurking near, no doubt in one of these caves. There Jonathan shot his arrows according to the sign agreed upon, and perhaps with some show of impatience not to have hit a desired mark, gave his bow to his attendant as soon as the arrows had been gathered up, and sent him hastily home. When the lad had disappeared the hidden fugitive stole forth into the dewy field. It was morning, all still and solitary, before life or work had begun. These strange new circumstances, and perhaps his melancholy vigil, and the sense that his life was in the hands of this generous young prince who had adopted him as his brother, brought home, no doubt, to David the wonderful difference between himself, a homeless fugitive, and the son of Saul the king. He bowed himself three times to the ground, falling on his face, in all the abasement of Eastern reverence. He was no longer the great captain, the husband of Michal, the honoured of Israel, but once more the son of Jesse, youngest and least important, the sheep-herd of the family of Bozrah.

jamin. But when the friends met all these artificial distinctions would seem to have been swept away, and Jonathan and David kissed each other and wept. It was as if the friendly earth, upon which their young swift steps had gone together on many an errand both of war and peace, had been rent between them. Few words were needed, if any : the abyss was not one which could be bridged over with hopeful speech of better days and other meetings. They were silent in the rending asunder of their lives. "Go in peace ; and the Lord be witness of that which is between me and thee," was all that Jonathan could say. "They wept one with another till David exceeded." The fugitive, the poet, the

“ The Lord is in His holy temple,  
The Lord’s seat is in heaven :  
His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men.  
The Lord trieth the righteous :  
But the ungodly and him that loveth wickedness  
Doth His soul abhor.

“ For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness ;  
His countenance will behold  
The thing that is just.”

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OUTLAW IN THE WILDERNESS.

THIS was the beginning of the most painful portion  
of David's life: that probation in the wildernes-

the hostile races which surrounded Israel on every side, and with no established centre of authority either civil or sacred. For Saul's headquarters at Gibeah were more a royal capital than the dwellings from which judges who preceded him had partially and confusedly ruled the people, each in his own house. And it was the ancient tabernacle of the wilderness which at Gilead, nor the temporary re-establishment of that at Kirjath-Jearim (the latter, it would seem, having fallen into forgetfulness), had been received as a national shrine: but each tribe or district formed, as it seemed, their own religious centre for themselves very much of the established ritual as was within their power. David arrived faint and weary at the house of the priest, answering to the astonished question of how he could be alone, *i.e.* with no formal retinue, by the excuse of sudden commission and urgent business for the which had compelled him to leave home without a camp or officer, even without his weapons. "Give me some bread," he asked; "whatever you may have." But the priest had no bread except the sacred show which he had just taken from the altar, and which had been commanded, was to be eaten by the priest alone. It must thus have been on the Sabbath Day that David, fasting and faint, arrived at the sanctuary: it was on the Sabbath that the loaves of unleavened bread were prepared by law, and forming the holy table. The analogy was therefore well-pleasing between this and the incident in the life of our Lord to which He Himself referred it. Ninth priest nor David seem to have experienced any such hesitation on the subject; mercy and sacrifice have at all times recognised as God's most acceptable offerings.

asked if there were any weapons in the peaceful shrine; and it must have been a great encouragement to his soul when the priest drew forth out of its wrappings no other than the sword of Goliath, "whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah." It must have been as if God Himself had thus laid up in store for him the weapon to which no man had so clear a right—the sign of his first and greatest victory. "There is none like that; give it to me," he said, with a fervency of utterance in which we can fully sympathise.

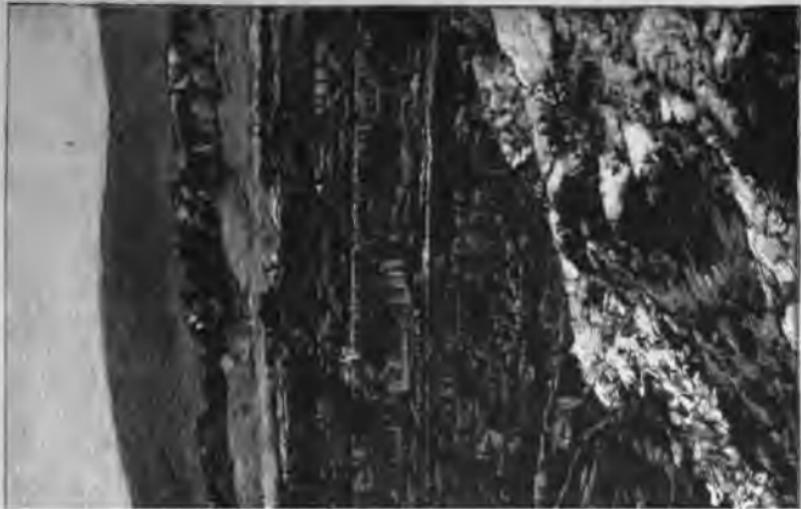
It is less easy, however, to understand after this sign, which must, one would suppose, have appealed to his imaginative nature by every argument of encouragement,

baron on either side. But terror was in the soul of the fugitive. He would seem to have found threatening faces about him from the moment he entered the foreign city, which was not wonderful considering what his achievements had been. He was like Coriolanus in Corioli, a man who had gained his name at the expense of those whose succour he sought; and it was soon apparent to him that safety was not to be found there. Perhaps he had hoped that he would not be recognised, but might pass as a mere Hebrew refugee in trouble with his own people, seeking service in the neighbouring court. But he soon became aware that a soldier so distinguished could not remain unknown. "Is not this David?" said the very first officials to whom he addressed himself, "David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands." Before even the news was carried to Achish of this visitor whose appearance created so much commotion, David had begun to perceive how great a mistake he had made. The wonder, which was so ready to turn into a menace, as they hurried him to the king's presence, showed him his danger; and though the expedient of feigning madness was not a dignified one, it was not unusual in the East. When Achish, eager to see this newcomer, but perceiving as he thought a mere maniac, turned upon those who had excited his curiosity and alarm, scornfully with the question, "Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow into my house?" the fugitive does not seem to have lost a moment in making his escape.

What was he to do, driven out at once from Israel and from Israel's enemies? No doubt it was hard for the young man to throw himself into the life of an outlaw, to

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plentiful householder, of honest and well-known folk, who had probably known what it was to suffer from the incursions of such wanderers, it might have appeared to him a better way to join the enemy as Coriolanus did, to be able to enforce terms upon his old persecutor, than to become in his turn a persecutor of the peaceful dwellers in the land, with whom all his sympathies were. But David had now no resource. He went back from Gath towards his own country again, a troubled and discouraged soul, the few retainers who had followed him drooping their crests as they toiled along the plain, until they reached that strange and wild district lying between the

*country of the Philistines, the mountainous tract between the Mediterranean and the Jordan.*

valour, though not so distinguished as the first three

would bring with him for as long as it lasted his easily carried provision of parched corn, his cakes of bread and handful of fruit. There would need no hecatombs of slain cattle to maintain these eastern warriors: yet many a raid must have gone out from the stronghold of Adullam, to keep four hundred men alive—raids, however, in which the prey carried off was probably stores of bread, raisins, and figs and parched corn, as in the story of Nabal, with an occasional sheep, rather than the “lifted” cattle and utter desolation left behind them of modern reivers, a much less destructive kind of plunder. There must have been wild animals in those wild regions to make a substantial addition to the fare of the exiles. It is a long

organised rebellion, no attempt upon the crown, was yet in arms, in self-defence, no more to be dealt with as an individual. Though he had been driven to it by the force of circumstances, and though he never raised his arm in offensive hostilities, not even Jonathan, who loved him, could plead now as in former times for the pardon of the misguided brother. Once again indeed that faithful friend came to him in the wilds where he had taken refuge, to warn him of renewed pursuit, and to repeat the covenant or oath of brotherhood between them: but after this hurried and secret meeting these two friends

was the latter argument which moved him he was soon destined to discover how futile was any such trust. King Saul, who had not stirred to rescue the city, heard with delight that David had ventured into "a town that hath gates and bars," and at once gathered together his followers to besiege the rebel, concluding with premature triumph that "the Lord hath delivered him into my hands"; not so quickly, however, but that David had time to escape, having first assured himself that Keilah had no mind to stand a siege on his behalf. We may well imagine that the addition of six hundred outlaws (to which number the band had now increased), with the wildness of their wandering life about them, to feed an

feast was less a petition than an inference: "Thy

leaving, one would fear, but little for the disappointed sheep-shearers thus forced to redeem their lives at the cost of their feast—"two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine" (skins no doubt like those in the grotesque blunted shape of the animal to whom they belonged, which are still employed by the water-sellers about the streets of Syrian cities), "five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn," besides a liberal supply of fruit. Abigail was not a moment too soon; she met David and his men "by the covert of the hill" in warlike array with their swords girded on them, coming swiftly on to execute judgment. The record does not say as it does on so many occasions that



idioms may occupy the learned philologist for ever if he will, but will never make him aware how it was that in this primitive age a story worthy of the most magnanimous Christian chivalry could find a place—or more wonderful still be invented, where no code of manners or of morals existed to make such an incident possible had it not been true.

We are all acquainted from our cradles with these twin tales. David, hunted from place to place, now driven from the city he had rescued, now from the woods and wild recesses of the desert, was lurking with a band of his followers in a deep cave where perhaps they were listening breathless to the crash of Saul's soldiers upon



looked out from the heights upon the encampment below and saw the place where Saul lay with Abner his general close by. "Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?" he asked after long gazing at the spot where his pursuers lay. Abishai, his sister's son, was the man who offered himself for that dangerous service, and when the night came, the two Eastern heroes, lightly clad, and softly shod, descended noiseless into the midst of the slumbering multitude. Again we are reminded of the ages of chivalry, of the minstrels' tales, and romance of modern thought. The two gliding figures reached the very centre of the encampment where the king lay, with his spear stuck in the ground within



the greater shame to the ineffectual guard that it was one of the people, any man so to speak, who had been able to thread the sleeping ranks and carry off the king's spear. Saul was a man of unusual stature, and no doubt his spear was known among the people like that of Goliath, "like a weaver's beam." And to see it, with its glittering blade shining in the morning sun on the other side of the ravine in the hand of the poet-orator, whose indignant yet tender remonstrance came pealing over those depths, must have affected powerfully the listening and eager host, as it affected the unhappy king himself, in whom once more his better nature burst forth. But Saul's moods of compunction were evane-

nd a parallel to David's case in that of a Scots noble in isgrace betaking himself with shame and wrath to the rotection of the English, with whom he had been in arfare all his life. In the same way the Douglas banished sought refuge in England, nay even a Stuart, Alexander of Albany, who was persecuted by his brother James III. on warrant no greater than that of Saul, followed the same example: both, however, falling into the guilt of plots against their native kingdom from which David kept himself free.

The story of David is indeed that of a blameless knight, a cavalier *sans peur et sans reproche* up to this time. He had done all in honour from the first moment of his appearance, putting forth no pretensions, behaving himself with all the grace of a perfect hero. What little transactions there may have been in the wilderness with those six hundred and their train of women and children to provide for, there is no record; but at all events he would seem to have been courteous and conciliatory even to those upon whom he levied supplies, as in the case of Tabal, where there is an ingratiating tone of friendliness and modesty in the first demand, remarkable in the case of a brigand chieftain. David has constantly been called, he was so able to take without apology what he desired. Blackmail, to be sure, is an ugly word; but the most carefully constructed system of taxes is in reality nothing but blackmail, the payment of that protection which a established government gives, and which it has a moral right to exact except on that supreme and universally acknowledged argument. The days of David were very primitive days, and Saul's authority or power of protection as king must have been limited; so that the outlaw who was (according to Nibel's judgment)

defenceless people. Any defence of David, however, on this score is sophistry to us, and would have been the most unnecessary thing in the world to him.

At all events the severest critic can find little else to reproach David with in this period of his career. He was forced into—not rebellion, for no act against Saul's authority is ever suggested—but into a wild and feudatory life by incessant pursuit and persecution; yet he raised no hostile banner, put forth no pretensions to the crown. And when in despair and sickness of heart he turned away and directed his steps once more to the Philistine court to seek the protection of the enemies of Israel it was only to find that in the Philistines

or at the door of his tent in the clear Eastern nights, in those intervals of peace when the pursuers were not at his heels, was probably a mere chant with cadences, that wild natural strain nothing in itself but an aid to the utterance of the poem—the minstrel's story, or the mourner's lament, or the psalm of triumph and joy—which is the beginning of all primitive music. And such as the following were the songs of the desert, the cry of the **exile and outlaw**—

“O Lord my God, in Thee do I put my trust :  
Save me from all them that persecute me ;  
Deliver me : lest he tear my soul like a lion,  
Rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver.

“O Lord my God, if I have done this ;  
If there be iniquity in my hands ;  
If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me ;  
(Yea, rather I have delivered him  
That without cause was my enemy :)  
Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it ;  
Yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth,  
And lay mine honour in the dust.

“Arise, O Lord, in Thine anger, against the rage of mine enemies :  
Awake for me, Thou who hast decreed justice.

He hath conceived mischief,  
And brought forth falsehood.  
He made a pit, and digged it,  
And is fallen into the ditch which he hath made.  
For his mischief shall return upon himself,  
And his violent dealing upon his own head.

"I will praise the Lord according to His righteousness:  
I will sing praise unto the name of the Lord most high."<sup>1</sup>

Another psalm which breathes the same spirit of almost despair, rising by the healing action of poetic utterance and deep reflection upon the grace of God into confidence and hope, we have already identified with that agonising pause in David's life when he waited in hidir

It is, as has been already remarked, a commonplace to say—what every devout reader must have felt in personal use of the Psalms—how often the denunciations of the enemies of the writer come in with a jarring discord into the prayers and vows of the suppliant: yet so far as David personally is concerned there is not only much excuse, but his force of malediction is in reality much less than is supposed. Doeg the Edomite, who betrayed the fact of his brief passage through Nob, and the kind offices of the unfortunate priest, thus bringing about the massacre of that priest and all his family, was, for instance, a ruffian who would have had short shift in my community: while on the other hand it is to be remarked that David's prayers for vengeance are limited to the desire that his enemies should fall into the net which they have laid for him, and the pit they have digged. That their craft and evil devices should fall back upon themselves, is, in the age when an eye was to be for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, a very moderate enunciation. It is remarkable indeed that to Saul himself David never from beginning to end shows any bitterness, and that he is always fully capable of appreciating the honesty and valour of such a character as Abner, with whom he has no quarrel. Curious too we must add again is the absolute want of partisanship in the record, and with all his faults never loses our pity, almost it may be said even at his worst moments our affection. Abner is fully recognised in his manly simplicity, made vivid to us by a few lines of portraiture. One might be warranted in saying that no such impartial history exists, and that never in any record, especially of civil war and such personal conflict, did the opponents of the eventually successful side get so fully their due.

ment of despair which led him: but he was no longer a solitary and powerless man, whose life might have been at any moment the forfeit of his temerity in thus venturing into the stronghold of his enemies: but at the head of a valiant and desperate band, certain to have sold their lives dearly if hospitality had been refused them. It is clear, as has been already said, that neither at this time nor at any other during Saul's lifetime had David any thought of an avowed and formalised rebellion. He was not a rival candidate for the throne: nor was he even stung by continual and unceasing pursuit to set up any rebel standard. The necessities of existence drove him to the ordinary predatory life of a desert chief.

their vantage ground on the hill, upon that sleeping host through which David threaded his way to the very tent of the king, who could doubt that the result would have been most disastrous for Saul and his careless followers? But no such idea ever seems to have entered his mind.

The cynical reader may say that the strength was too certainly on Saul's side to make any such attempt possible: but that consideration has never restrained any rebel of David's prestige and importance, nor probably could any ordinary levy of three or four times their number have stood before these tried and renowned warriors led by such a chief. It is most singular and markable that no project of resistance ever seems to have been considered. David and his men disappeared to the fastnesses which they knew so well, when they were pushed by their pursuers; twice, as we have seen, he attempted to overcome the strong hostility against him by parley and the evidences of his own veneration for the Lord's anointed. But when neither continual illure, nor those signs of a magnanimity which Saul had the heart to appreciate though they made no permanent difference in his actions, failed to cut short the pursuit, the harassed outlaw could hold out no longer. "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more upon the coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand." His step, doubtful as it may appear to have been, as adopted by a Hebrew patriot, was the dictate of necessity, less than of a weary despair; and it seems to have been successful in its immediate object. Perhaps Saul felt that the rival whom he so feared had put himself at disadvantage in thus seeking the protection of the common enemy: just as the Scots in their early history

found it difficult to pardon a Scottish knight who had accepted the protection of England. And the result was that the pursuit was stopped, and David was left alone in his exile. It was no doubt an advantage also to the harassed country, continually troubled by a kind of civil

his protector “the Geshurites, the Gezrites and the Amalekites,” all, it must be allowed, ancient enemies of Israel, and accordingly fair prey to a Hebrew warrior—destroying both cities and people and carrying away all their substance. That this was recognised as his means of living is evident from the highly characteristic question, put in all civility and friendliness by Achish, over whom the Hebrew chief had exercised his usual charm. “Whither have ye made a raid to-day?” said this indul-

lag, doubtless employing himself in various expeditions of the kind above recorded. and settling himself more

which the stronger ties of patriotism and kindred might have justified to himself? A more exciting moral crisis could not be. But we shall never know how it would have ended: whether faith unfaithful, and the honour of a fugitive so deeply indebted to his protector, or natural feeling and all the strong inducements of ambition and policy would have carried the day. Fortunately for

David must have listened to the echoes of this controversy, which no doubt had flown through all the camp as every new detachment arrived, and soon penetrated to where the Hebrews—heavy and sad—pitched their tents among the alien host. “Their honour rooted in dis-honour stood:” every claim of gratitude and loyalty bound them to the generous king: and yet when they saw before them the standard of their country, and recognised the ensigns, each man of his tribe, what pangs must have been in every heart! The rage of the Philistine leaders no doubt fell like balm from heaven upon David and his men. He made a little polite objection, a little remonstrance to his royal patron—“What have I

greet their return, and every sign of a successful raid such as those with which they were themselves familiar, not a living creature left in the desolate place to tell the

of repose, when they had stopped for the night, and secure in the absence of all the warriors of the country and the impossibility of pursuit, had given themselves up to feasting and rejoicing. It was not only Ziklag that had been spoiled but the borders of Judah, and those of Philistia, both nations in preparation for the coming conflict having been compelled to leave their frontiers unguarded; and the night camp was surrounded by bleating of sheep and lowing of cattle, as well as by the unhappy groups of women and children huddled together, not knowing perhaps the moment when the caprice of their conquerors might inflict still greater misery. Upon

*the枕their camp, fanning the S. H. L.*

and proving how very differently he had been employed than in the army of the Philistines, where no doubt the rumour had already run that he was in arms against Israel. Much the reverse! pursuing the Amalekites in a totally different direction, avenging his own quarrel and those of his compatriots, recovering the spoil which he thus generously shared with all his friends. The generosity and chivalry of David's character, so unexampled in his time, need not make us overlook those qualities of policy and astute calculation in which he was likewise strong. He was not a knight of romance alone, though he was so in a manner unknown to any other primitive literature of any nation—but at the same time he was a far-seeing and clear-headed Oriental chief, aware of a great future before him, and with no mind to neglect any just means of conciliating the popular favour. That he should have been able to turn that decisive moment when fate seemed against him, when it seemed all but certain that he must compromise himself for ever with Israel by fighting on the side of her enemies, into a triumphant vindication of his patriotism and unfailing sympathy for his country is the most wonderful instance of the way in which fact itself, and the contrarieties of human sentiment, fight for the man who knows how to use them. Had the Philistine lords been wise like David they would have forced him into that self-committal instead of affording him the means of turning the situation to his advantage in every way. The very Amalekites helped him in that futile raid of theirs, which for the first moment looked like the overturn of his fortunes and happiness.

He was still in the flush of his triumph dividing his spoil, sending out his presents here and there, perhaps in

all the signs of woe upon him, his garments rent and earth upon his head, ostentatious in his show of mourning, arrived with news of the fight. The Israelites had been beaten; they had been driven back dispersed and flying before the Philistines, and Saul and Jonathan were both killed. It was not a Hebrew but an Amalekite who brought the news, a man with no natural occasion for such lamentation, whose attempt to curry favour with himself was evidently more clear to David than his sorrow for the calamity. And when he proceeded to tell a fabulous story of how it was he who had killed Saul at the prayer of the defeated king "because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen,"

his misery and downfall he fell upon his sword. It recalls the fervour with which the first James of Scotland pursued the same exercise, apparently without effect in either case. But the wonderful song of both national and personal sorrow, the lament of Israel at once and of David, whose affections had never been altogether alienated from Saul, the first patron of his youth, by any intervening events, and who loved Jonathan as a brother: is one of those immortal songs which to all nations and in all languages become the utterance of the heart.

“ How are the mighty fallen !  
The beauty of Israel  
Is slain upon thy high places.

“ Tell it not in Gath,  
Publish it not in the streets of Askelon ;  
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,  
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

“ Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew,  
Neither rain, upon you,  
Nor fields of offerings ;  
For there the shield of the mighty is cast away,

The shield of Saul

“ How are the mighty fallen  
In the midst of the battle !

“ O Jonathan,  
Thou wast slain in thy high places.  
I am distressed for thee,  
My brother Jonathan :

“ Very pleasant hast thou been to me :  
Thy love to me was wonderful,  
Passing the love of women.

“ How are the mighty fallen,  
And the weapons of war perished ! ”

Thus the first portion of the life of David, his probation and training came to an end in great calamity.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE KING OF ISRAEL.

THE romance of David's life is so full of attraction that we are a long time arriving at Jerusalem, which is the special aim of this narrative. We will not therefore linger upon the intermediate steps, or the confused period which elapsed before his full recognition as King of Israel. It was only after receiving the Divine command that he left Ziklag and adventured himself in Hebron, in the southern part of Judah, as far removed as the boundaries of the tribe permitted from the home of Saul; which had always been an important place, the ancient city of Abraham, still deeply venerated as such even in the present day. Here he settled with a certain tentative air, his men scattering themselves among the villages, many, no doubt, finding after all their wanderings their native homes again. His tribe which, no doubt, had followed his erratic career with interest, and heard a thousand reports and half-fabulous tales of his prowess, besides the still more attaching influence of those songs in the wilderness, which had flown from lip to lip as oral literature does everywhere, but nowhere so surely as in the East—must by this time have felt that its own power and greatness as the first of the tribes was bound up with his fate. And they lost no time in taking the bold step, dangerous it Saul's family had been able to

retain their power, of anointing David king. One of his first acts was to reward and promise special protection to the men of Jabesh-Gilead who had recovered Saul's remains from the Philistines and given them honourable burial; and no doubt the strains of the funeral song were sung over the whole country at once in celebration of the dead and honour to the living. But David had yet many difficulties before him ere his position was established. These difficulties were not only with his enemies but among his friends and defenders; for it is only now that another figure, more rugged and far less attractive than David, but full of character and power, a strong shrewd Hebrew without embellishment or grace,

draught to the tent door where their leader sat. What a waste of strength and effort he must have thought it! but when the question was one of hard fighting and the responsibilities of a great command, Joab and his attendant brothers were never at fault.

The first great event in David's reign was the battle between the supporters of Saul's family under his great general Abner, and the host of Judah and servants of David under Joab. Abner, though he occupies but a small place in the record, is so set before us as to acquire all our sympathies. It would be hard to say precisely why this is, for we have few details of this manly and noble personage and can scarcely give a reason for the attraction we feel towards him. His was all the real strength that belonged to the impoverished house of Saul shorn of its natural leaders, the heir as well as the head of the race. Abner it was who set up the feeble son that remained upon an insecure throne, and gathering all the forces at his command sought the test of battle without delay, hoping no doubt to crush the rival of his master at a blow. The fight took place at Gibeon, though it would seem to have been unlike Joab's prudence to allow himself to be drawn so far from home, and to risk the newly established kingdom of David on such a hazard. Once more the account of the battle might have come out of Froissart. The armies placed themselves, "sat down," one on each side of the pool of Gibeon. "Let the young men now arise and play before

We are not told what was the issue of that preliminary struggle—though no doubt it was mutual slaughter: but in the end Abner was beaten and his followers broken and dispersed, though not without a melancholy incident to spoil the triumph of the victors. The youngest of the three brothers, Asahel, was “as light of foot as a wild roe,” and as Abner retreated pursued him, no doubt fired by the thought of distinguishing himself and emulating the exploits of his uncle David in his youth. Abner turned to warn the hot-headed lad again and again, bidding him seek a more fit antagonist, almost imploring him to save himself. But when such arguments proved unavailing and there was no alternative but to kill or

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speak with him quietly" killed him there. According to the morals of his age he had a right thus to avenge his brother; but it was a tragic incident with which to begin a reign. There was a universal mourning over the great general, who was honoured even by his adversaries: and some three thousand years after the people wept for Abner we, too, who read the story acknowledge a remorseful regret for the great career cut short, the noble knight laid low. David's wail over him is not so fine, nor so clear as his lament for Saul, being dictated by no such intimate connection. The untoward event, however, called forth indignation as well as regret.

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eignty of the nation, or to disturb the feeble sway of Ishbosheth in the midland tract of Palestine which recognised his authority: notwithstanding the constant muttering of hostilities, never brought to any decisive battle, which existed between them. In any case it is apparent that his views of kingship were very different from those elementary views of Saul who was more the champion of Israel than its monarch, and had not changed his residence nor probably much modified his living on account of that imperfectly comprehended charge. The kings of the surrounding nations were kings of cities, of small subdivisions of the country, without importance enough to favour any large battle.

steps to precipitate matters, but to have kept in full fidelity his promise to Saul not to cut off his house. In the meantime, however, it is impossible to doubt that his mind was full of thought and deliberation over the high part which he had yet to play and the best means of consolidating and establishing on the soundest foundations that kingdom which he foresaw.

Hebron was at the extreme end of the territory of Judah, much less suited than Gibeah had been for a capital. With our present ideas it would have seemed to us very natural that the historian should have spoken here of the sacred recollections of Mount Moriah, and of that great act of Abraham which had made it so memorable. To the Jew of later times, as well as to the Christian, and to the Mohammedan, that association would assuredly have occurred, and have been stated, as an important motive in the choice of Jebus for the future capital; but ancient tradition is by no means clear upon the fact, and the more ancient writer occupies himself with that alone and leaves the motives to evidence themselves. The city of the Jebusites had other recommendations. Its position was strong and central. The mountains encompassed it about like a natural guard; towards Philistia, for example, on the south and west it was defended by a series of rocky defiles, where a few men could have held an army at bay, and though these natural fortifications were less towards the north, that was precisely the point of the least importance when the tribes of Israel should have become one nation. In no other place were there the same advantages combined. It is curious to find that little Jebusite town, upon the scarpes and shelves of its rocks, which had been counted from the age of the first incursion into Canaan among the cities allotted to Judah, still holding its fierce local independence five or six generations after; but it is evi-

dent that this occurred with no small number of the towns which had been given over on paper, as we should say, to the invading tribes, but which sloth or an unusually firm resistance, or the intervention of other motives of a more immediately urgent kind, had induced them to leave alone until a more convenient season.

It would almost appear as if David had made overtures to the inhabitants of this little city of some peaceful mode of acquiring possession, for we have their answer full of defiance and vain confidence. The message is confused in phraseology or has become so through defective translations. "Even the blind and the lame. He shall not come in," says the improved version on the



of this future capital, in one sense, of the world. Two hills, which are not much more mountains than are the seven hills of Rome, may be traced in profile from the higher ground on the other side of the valley of Himmion: The western hill rising to a point against the morning sun slopes downward, the modern wall marking the outline of the descent; then that line of defence rises to the summit of an angular platform on another eminence, square and bold, from whence the eastern slope falls abruptly, almost at one point a precipice, to the second valley below. Beyond this, inseparable, is the third hill of the little range, the Mount of Olives, now painfully crowned by a high white modern campa

western hill alone. The little town lay, as the towns of Judah still lie, upon the side of the eminence, its little stronghold planted upon the height, its low houses clinging to the rocky sides, probably in many cases with a cave for the innermost room, and founded upon the ledges and layers of the living stone. They were so much higher it would seem, in civilisation then, than are the Arabs even of the present day who content themselves with mud huts plastered against the protecting slope—that



THE ANCIENT JERUSALEM. JERUSALEM OF DAVID'S TIME. CONJECTURAL.

their houses were of stone, a distinction due to their stony country which provided the materials of such solid construction. Across that deep low trench of a valley lay a green and rounded hill, through which broke points of rock, sloping softly upward on the side which was towards the town, but steep on the further declivity. We may be permitted to conjecture that its slopes were covered with corn, their verdure a contrast to the

upon the western slope looking towards Jerusalem, and that the farmer had placed his winnowing floor upon the height where all the winds would help him in his work, close by the rocky altar on which Abraham had made his sacrifice. There must have been so many rudely-built altars all about the country, that perhaps that traditional place was less remarked—or it might be that the farmer hoped it would bring him good fortune to thresh his corn near a sacred place. It must, however, again be noted that we know nothing of any ancient Jewish traditions as to this spot, which explains why it is that no mention of the sacred associations of Mount Moriah are found either in the history or in the man-

dours unknown to Israel, was evidently enough for the

race, whose mere physical necessities were so overwhelming, and who had to hold their own on every side against strong and watchful enemies. Nothing can be more deceptive than our calculations of policy as solely actuating such a movement. Had David not been moved by strong religious faith, and a boundless conviction that God was with him, and all things in the Divine hand, he never would have attained the position he now held; and it would be out of harmony with all that we know of him could we suppose that he was not himself the most fervent of the worshippers who filled the valley with their songs as they went along towards the village on its little elevation, where half forgotten in the Jon-

curious way which it is so hard to understand. But these were probably old shrines either adapted from the surrounding nations or instituted hastily to meet an everyday necessity. Kirjath-Jearim lies on a soft little knoll in the sunshine, its level lines of low houses surrounded by trees more luxuriant than are usual in Palestine, its position especially peaceful and smiling—though so near the border line, where the fierce Philistines must



THE JERUSALEM OF SOLOMON.—CONJECTURAL.

have watched, one cannot but feel those staring proceedings the more complacent and prosaic. Hebrews with much curiosity and some alarm. The processions must have surrounded the house of Abinadab which was "on the hill," with their priests and their elders, waiting till the Ark was brought to the open court near the "tent of meeting." The Ark was a large wooden chest, overlaid with gold, and containing the tables of the law, the golden pot of manna, and the rod of Aaron.

delight and excitement of the festival had made the crowd of followers almost forget what was the sacred occasion of their rejoicing: and by the time that the music and the rhythmic dance—those convulsions of almost solemn movement, which are so unlike anything that we know under the name of dancing—had reached the southern valley under the hill of Zion the wild excitement of the crowd had probably reached a climax. As we have no reason to suppose that natural causes are not used by Providence in all ages, it is legitimate, we think, to believe that the sudden death of Uzzah, who is said to have taken hold of the Ark to steady it, and thus

say that we were “displeased” with what was recognised to be an act of God.

But this mood did not last. The king looked down from his fortress night and day upon the valley in which was hidden that sacred symbol: and as he came and went beheld on his way the empty tabernacle, the folds of the closed and vacant tent where he had meant to place the venerable token of God’s presence with his people. It must have become a growing preoccupation, an eager longing and desire; indeed from this period the fixed idea of a House of God, more splendid than any tent or tabernacle, seems to have taken possession of David’s mind. And then there came tales of how everything thronged in the household of the man who had given to that sacred symbol the shelter of his roof, until by degrees the superstitious terrors wore off, the project was taken up again, and the wish of the king’s heart was temporarily fulfilled. A feast more joyous still than the former which ended in so much trouble, made the shout of the newly named JERUSALEM echo to the skies, as all the splendour of Israel, everything that the warlike people possessed of glittering armour and waving ensigns, and many coloured robes, in the brilliancy yet harmony of hues which is natural to the East, poured down into the valley. David had taken advantage of the pause to secure that duly qualified and appointed persons should be there to convey the solemn burden to its place, and satisfy all the reverential laws which hedged about the sacred Ark of the testimony. The white-robed band of Levites in the midst arranged in their orders, singlets and harpists, and all the fit attendants, with the priests at their head, must have made a wonderful shining centre to all the dark array of the mighty men of valour, the captains and champions, sturdily with their lances in the wilderness, who were inseparable from their leader, his

brothers-in-arms: and all the commoner train that crowded after them. We have no clear information where it was exactly that Obed-edom and his sons wielded their flails, while the winnowing winds through the open shed drove the useless chaff away. But no corn would be threshed or labour of the field go on on that great day. All the way up to the city gates through the ravine, all gay with many coloured crowds, what a sight to see that procession wind!—the first of many wonderful sights, the beginning of the link which bound the lesser hill to the loftier, the throne of national worship to the throne of the house of David. And as the choirs

*moved towards the city and the last concert was*

"Who is the King of glory ?  
The Lord of hosts,  
He is the King of glory."

The curious story which follows shows us from some window in the wall a woman looking out upon the approaching procession, a woman sad at heart, torn from her ancient surroundings, brought back perhaps to a husband whom she had ceased to love, expected to wear a face of joy at the establishment of a new kingdom over the ruins of her father's house. Michal had loved David and saved his life in the early days of their devotion. But since then years of trouble and change had elapsed and other loves had taken the place of that romance. She had been restored not without reluctance on her part, forced perhaps by the extraordinary manners of the time, brought back with weeping to find other women in David's house and a crowd of children with whom she had nothing to do. Her heart, most like, was weary for an occasion to pour forth its bitterness. And when Saul's proud daughter saw the new king leading that dance, dressed in the scanty white tunic of a priest with

had no doubt been as superior to the vile motive which she attributed to him as are to this day many men on whom angry kinsfolk throw like aspersions—and answered indignantly: "I will yet be more vile than this, I will be base in my own sight," he cries. "It was before the Lord, who chose me before thy father, and before all his house." This altercation breaks painfully into the beautiful scene full of national devotion and sacred triumph, but embittered, as so often happens, by domestic discord. Michal had no child until the day of her death. She remained alone in the crowded household passionate and soured, she who had been the hero's first love. Let us hope she had not left children behind her.



worthy of the age in which such sheer devotion was the ideal of the spotless character. And like the high hero of the poet's dream, the Arthur who never was by sea or shore, David whom we all discuss with so many disparagements, the ambitious, the schemer, the voluptuary —David received this proof of supreme devotion like the prince and poet he was. "My God forbid it me," he cries, "that I should do this thing: shall I drink the blood of these men that have put their lives in jeopardy? for with the jeopardy of their lives have they brought it." No drop of that precious crude was for human lips. He poured it out before the Lord. Where did they learn this sentiment unreserved to the creation?

unfolding drama, with its great rolls of story full within and without of lamentation and mourning. It is the common idea of humanity that its own extraordinary and incomprehensible being is in some sort the centre of the universe, an idea of which it would be impossible to disabuse the primitive mind, and which it is difficult even for the most fully informed to forego. We know that the stars are greater worlds than our own and that they are innumerable in their greatness, but still the inalienable poetry of nature compels us to see in them the lights that fill our nights with beauty, the spectators of our wayward courses. It may be that we are indeed the object of continual interest in this other way. The record of happiness is blank: the moving story, the eloquence, the poetry, even the keener flashes of delight, must all be the accompaniments of mortal distress. We can purchase the attention of the spheres in no other way.

And in David's case the time had now arrived of success and widespread victory. He overcame all the peoples round him, taking homage and tribute from the Moabites and Philistines, and from distant Damascus, the renowned city where he "put garrisons," bringing from it golden shields and "much brass": a curious token that the same industry which flourishes still in that ancient and wealthy place, was already one of its known attributes. One can imagine the Israelitish warriors, unused to such wonders, prowling about the great bazaars, probably little different from those of to-day, and gazing amazed at the glittering wares high piled upon every side, the wonderful carpets, the vessels of gold and silver, the garments woven in many colors: carrying off that for the king, and this to gladden the eyes of those daughters of Israel who would greet their returning steps with clasp and clasp and kiss and kiss all over the face, too

acy of David, and the great traders of Tyre, perhaps to divert his attention from their wealth, and the fact that they had no army on land sufficient to resist him, made haste to offer their friendship and their gifts and their skilful workmen to build the new king a palace worthy his great name. It was perhaps the first introduction of anything that could be called luxury into the spare dwellings of the hitherto but partially settled tribes: and the wonder must have spread through the little rocky city as the caravans arrived with their spoils, and the Tyrians with their loads of cedar: and the great hewn stones, Cyclopean masses which still are the wonder of the excavators of the nineteenth century, wei-

which already had shaped itself in his fervent imagination. Not for him, with blood upon his hands, was this great and crowning achievement of life to be. To the poet, framing in his mind all glorious things, who had already begun to muse and dream of the great walls, the fragrant portals of cedar, the wreathed work of the cornices and capitals, this was no doubt a terrible check and disappointment. Many years after when he unfolded his plans to his son Solomon, David described all the decorations which he desired to be carried out in the yet unbuilt Temple, with a sigh of unaccomplished desire. "All this," he said, "the Lord made me understand in writing by hand upon me," an expression in which there is all the pathos of a cherished hope unfulfilled.

When Nathan left him after this interview David entered into the tent where the Ark dwelt in solemn gloom under its curtains, and poured out his soul in thanks to God, who had promised to establish his house for ever.

"Who am I, O Lord God? and what is my house,  
That Thou hast so brought me hitherto?  
Yet was this but a small thing in Thy sight,  
O Lord God;  
But Thou hast spoken also of Thy servant's house  
For a great while to come,  
And is this the manner of man,  
O Lord God?"

It was not the manner of man; and yet there is a poignant note of pain in the outpouring of thanksgiving. The Lord had given him far more than he had thought of or demanded, not only a son to sit on his throne after him, but an everlasting throne to be established for ever, the throne of a greater than man already divinely indicated to the hopes of the world. Yet hidden in this bountiful giving there was a withholding which wrung

had had his share of glory, the glory of great fame and honour and incalculable promotion, the renown of a great leader and ruler. He had established the dominion of Israel, and—crowning happiness in the eyes of an Eastern prince—he was thus proclaimed father of a never-ending line of kings to be: but that Temple of his dreams, more glorious than was ever built with hands, that great psalm erected in everlasting stone and lined with gold and filled with music, that beautiful imagination was refused to him. To know that Solomon should do it, was no doubt a great thing: but yet a man's son, though dear, is not himself. His was the imagination, his the heart in which this great thought had been conceived.

chief reproach of his life. By this time he had retired from the active conduct of the wars which were still going on all around under the generalship of the redoubtable Joab. David himself had been prevented by the strong remonstrance of his counsellors and the people generally from leading his own army as in former times "lest Thou quench the light of Israel," and had yielded to that reasonable prayer: so that now "at the time when kings go forth to battle," a curious indication of the warlike habit of the nations round, "David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel" to destroy Ammon, or whatsoever other work of the kind might be in hand. "And David sat in his house"—set aside, although on the complimentary argument that his life was too valuable to be risked: and dreamed of the Temple he was not to be allowed to build, and entered in all the force of his mature life and passions into the storm of fierce temptation, never so strong as with those whose active life has thus come to a pause.

There were in those days no scruples in Israel as to polygamy, and David was in this respect very far from a saint. He seems at once to have celebrated his conquest of Jerusalem, for instance, by taking more wives out of the newly acquired city, the one event following the other as a natural consequence in a manner almost come to our eyes. But to take into his house the wife of another great warrior, a man of sufficient importance to appear among the list of the thirty heroes, was a more serious matter. It is unfortunately in all history an incident so common that it would scarcely have counted as a reproach in many other literature, and few kings have the right to throw stones at David. But the careful record of his attempts to conceal the shame of the woman and avoid

nored. David dared not, it would seem, risk such a scandal in his new capital, and to hide his guilt had recourse first to mean expedients and then to a bloody and desperate act. Failing in all attempts to seduce Uriah he sent to Joab in the field that commission of murder and treachery. "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle." To be in the van is at all times a credit for a soldier, the post of honour, as of danger: probably Uriah was made to feel himself the selected champion, and so, let us hope, met his death gloriously with no consciousness of the shameful cause.

It is curious to remark that the uncompromising Joab, who was by no means certain to give to his master

mination to satisfy all his desires. There was a hideous pause during which the wife of Uriah mourned for her husband, which seems to the reader an additional horror in the mockery of sorrow. But let us hope that Bathsheba knew nothing about the cause of his death, and that even the guilty satisfaction with which she must have felt that this event secured her own safety, would stir up compunctions in her mind and make the mourning not all a pretence and mockery. To enter into the harem of the king in such circumstances would be not unattended by trouble we may be sure, to the woman whose story would be whispered with many a commentary from one to another by those free-spoken women of Israel, who, notwithstanding the bondage of polygamy, were never slow to express their opinions, even to their lord himself. But for David there was reserved a more emphatic condemnation. The incident would have been swept aside, like so many similar incidents in the lives of kings, perhaps would never have secured a mention in the chronicle, but for the Divine reproof that followed. If as M. Renan<sup>1</sup> supposes the records of David's life were taken from his own account, favourably shaped in his own interest, it would be difficult to imagine what the motive could be for introducing the parable of Nathan—unless that the poet gained mastery over the man, and David felt himself incapable of keeping back a story so instinct with poetry and feeling. The king was in the flush of passion satisfied, and the exertion of a new incident in the life of comparative inactivity, to which he was now condemned, when Nathan appeared charged with his message. The prophet came as to the

<sup>1</sup> That great authority is of opinion that the story of Uriah is a mere fable, though he does not tell us on what grounds; yet that is a very common error to discredit the Prophets, & to suppose that

judge of Israel, bound to see right and justice administered everywhere, with his brief but tremendous indictment.

"There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was to him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come un-

come, which is said to have followed. The loss of a new-born infant would seem but a small matter in that overflowing Eastern house, swarming with the sons of the king; yet no father of one sole heir and hope could have felt it more deeply than David appears to have done. As he lies on the ground in an agony of humiliation and prayer all the night through, beseeching God for the life of his child, absorbed and swallowed up in his penitence **as he was before in his pleasure, the heart of the reader melts over the stricken man.** His punishment was far from being over in the death of that innocent. Absalom lay before him in his way, and Amnon, and many a grief connected with his children: not easily or lightly was his expiation to be made: but no man, and still less any woman, who has passed through such a vigil, will refuse the tribute of sympathy to David. What was one little life among so many? but of each was it not possible that he was the chosen one, the seed of David who was to sit upon David's throne for ever? When all was over, and he rose from his prostration in that calm which his astonished servants could not understand, those words with which millions of bereaved parents have endeavoured to staunch their wounds, fell from David's lips: "I will go to him: but he shall not return to me." The child had a better fate than that of any king's son: the father went out to his duties a changed and sobered man.

The very next step in his career plunges him into his more real and bitter punishment, into those troubles of a father among a tumultuous company of high-spirited and privileged young men, which the father of priests can perhaps best understand, but which are not unknown to humbler spheres. That "evil against him out of his

painful and revolting to our ears, of Amnon and Tamar, nor how it could be possible that a legitimate and permitted bond could exist between the son and daughter, even though by different mothers, of the same man. But the vengeance of Absalom is quite comprehensible, justifiable indeed according to every rule of that primitive period. It opens to us another glimpse of the economy of Israel and the manners of the time. It would seem that Absalom was in special favour with his father, one of the chief among the king's sons, to all of whom in his excess of parental love David was over-indulgent. His mother was a king's daughter, who must have caught

*the roving eye of David in his raid upon Ziklag again.*

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children in their glory and joy of youth, than there was in that joy when possessed by ourselves. David must have turned back to his graver life with the smile and the blessing still upon his lips.

But very different was the return. Towards the evening while it was scarcely yet time to look for the home-coming of the revellers, a hasty post came wildly up the hill, with clang of hoofs and breathless shout of evil tidings—the king's sons all killed, the sheep-shearing turned into a carnage. Before it reached David the cry had become more definite. “Absalom has slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left.” The king heard the evil news and it would seem did not

panic to deceive the possible pursuer: and immediately there burst into the hall the frightened and breathless company of the young men who had left home so gaily. "They lifted up their voice and wept sore: and the king and all his servants wept." They were safe, but one brother was dead, and one fled with the stain of blood upon him. There would be among that distracted group some for Amnon and some for Absalom: the brother who had brought shame on the whole family and the brother who had avenged that shame so bitterly: but they were all probably very young and in their sudden terror unfit for anything but flight. And was it, perhaps, already floating through all minds that the foolish indulgence of David, who had not chastised the crime of the first, was thus to blame for the whole catastrophe? but on these points we can but conjecture, the record says nothing. Amnon was the firstborn of David's sons, and perhaps that distinction made it more difficult for him to visit one who was next to the head of the house, and held a certain right of authority over the others, with the punishment he deserved. It was also no doubt an additional motive to Absalom in whose heart the hope of succeeding, if not already the idea of superseding his father had taken root, to remove his elder brother out of his way.

This was the beginning of the tragedy which overshadowed the remainder of David's life and brought him into affliction and downfall greater than in all the troubles of his youth he had ever known. Jerusalem, after the time of mourning was over which filled her lately rejoicing streets with woe, came back to her usual aspect and went on with her building and thriving, covering the hillside with new houses, extending her boundaries day by day, welcoming back her armies crewed with victory, and her visitors who came, with designs and

flourished to show what they could do to the king. The city throve, the kingdom increased in extent and order, the soldiers of Israel and their general returned to their homes in the stormy season, and went forth with their banners flying in the spring. The natural course and order of all things went on as before. But the King of Israel in his house of cedar, the palace that shone in the sunshine, was cheered neither by conquest nor tribute, nor by the vessels of gold and silver which he was laying up, nor the plans which he was drawing out for the future house of God. His heart was heavy for his children, not only for Amnon dead, but for Absalom in exile, whose gallant presence he missed at every point and for

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court. But most likely nobody had taken the handsome youth seriously until that deed of blood which distinguished him still more effectually than his good looks and royal parentage, from among the crowd of his brethren—or indeed thought of that action now as anything but a well-deserved and not dishonourable revenge.

Two years of humiliation followed during which Absalom, though permitted to inhabit Jerusalem, was not allowed to enter his father's house, or see his face, years which were no doubt more hard upon the king who loved his son than upon the son who was plotting how best to overthrow his father's throne. It is difficult to account for so long continued a punishment in this case

his continual poring over those plans for the impossible Temple, his encouragement of foreign artists, filling Jerusalem with useless dilettantism, taking the bread out of his warriors' mouths, would no doubt be the subject of many a lampoon, whispered from guest to guest, with bursts of profane laughter. Who was to carry out those plans and put away all that treasure from the use of those who were young and full of the faculty of enjoyment? Not Absalom one might be sure, who loved to have everything beautiful and splendid about him, and had all the royal instincts of magnificence which David, humbly born, directed to that dream of a house of God. And the people who loved David in reality, yet never can resist the influence of such jests, no doubt laughed too, pleased to make that harmless rebellion against constituted authority, and full of malicious hostility to the foreigners, the artists who would be closeted with the king for hours while even his own son was kept out. And all that was young and gay would collect about Absalom who had pleasure and advancement to bestow in the future and for the present a lively youthful house full of sport and brightness instead of those sober chambers of the monarch where care dwelt and serious thought.

When the embargo was removed from this dangerous prince, and the king had received him with ill-deserved effusion of long-suppressed love, Absalom became bolder still. He set up a household beyond the pretensions even of a Prince of Wales, like a king, with an army of running footmen when he went forth to clear the way before him, and all the tokens of Oriental greatness. He had learned that fashion no doubt at his uncle's court at Geshur, where the uses of royalty were more firmly established than among the democratic Hebrews. And he

Ahitophel, the wisest of the Israelites, must have been already in it, though that great counsellor was not yet openly on Absalom's side. He made a practice of going out to the gate where it was the king's duty to sit in judgment and hear all the cases that were brought before him, placing himself in all his bravery, and with his gracious bearing, in the way of the litigants. It is implied though not said that David had become perhaps careless of this duty, came seldom to the seat of justice, was more and more preoccupied and absorbed, as it would be the policy of the plotters to represent, with that Temple of his, and his plan of hiding away for its future use or ornament all those treasures of gold and silver.

throne there. The rebel pleaded a vow which he had taken to perform sacrifices at Hebron, and received his father's permission to leave Jerusalem for that purpose with a strong following, all his own intimates and their trains, and two hundred men in addition who apparently formed the escort of the pretended pilgrims. Some time elapsed before it became known in Jerusalem what this expedition meant, and then we must suppose from his after conduct **that it burst like a thunderbolt upon David**, who had either been unaware of all that was happening, or had turned **a deaf ear to any further accusation against his son** after having been separated from him so long. The conduct of David seems unaccountable in this sudden and great emergency. Not a thought of resistance or the maintenance of his own right seems to have been in him, nothing of the spirit of the old warrior. It is true that he was already an old man; but that does not seem to account for the complete collapse, not only of power, but of spirit, in him. The first thoughts in his mind when he heard that his son was in open revolt were those of terror and submission. "Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." The one word of generous feeling in this, the desire to preserve Jerusalem from the horrors of a siege and the vengeance of the successful rebels, is the only thing that softens the reader's amazement and almost contempt. The great David, the hero of so many fights, the conqueror not of Jerusalem alone but of so many lands and cities, he who had been celebrated in song in his very cradle, had become a mere cipher in the hands of his son.

out of the old warrior and all his courage? Was it those  
long years of inactive life, the covering cloth of age, the



His sanction and guardianship. How could a guilty wanderer flying from the vengeance that had been denounced upon him lay that flattering unction to his soul? It seems to have brought a faint glimmer of hope, however, into his mind to see the sacred symbol and feel that the sympathies of the priests were with him; for a thought of coming back breaks in now for the first time into his despair. "Carry back the Ark of God into the city," he says. "If I find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and show me both it, and His habita-  
.. ."

cannot but remember how often in after days He who was the Son of David passed over that brook, going to His sacred meditations in the garden, or coming back to the cross and the grave.

"David went up the ascent of Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot; and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went." This was evidently more than a mere flight: it was a penitential procession, a confession of the half-forgotten sins for which now, at last, retribution had come. He was going back to those old haunts where his troubled youth had been spent: and he remembered his errors and bowed his head before that justice which had tarried long but never had forgotten. It might have been said of David as it was of Job—had he served God for nought? What promotion had been given to him, what prosperity, what glory! "I have seen the wicked flourish like a green bay tree." How his own words, the utterances of his prosperous and glorious days, must have poured back upon his mind as he went forth leaving all behind him. And, deepest pang of all, by the hand of his son whom he loved, who had brought misery and shame upon him, but towards whom his heart never ceased to yearn. Those who scoff at David and set forth his great crime as the central point of his life can never have followed the tragedy through its after scenes. That was indeed its central point to his own consciousness, the grand contradiction to all the generousies and magnanimities of his life, the one occasion on which passion made him false and cruel, he whose nature was so chivalrous and kind. What humiliation was too great for the man who had so sinned, whose offence had thus been brought low, even to all that could be lowest! But let us Discon-

prosperous years : but God had not forgotten it. Who else but this could have taken the heart out of the old warrior, the mighty man of valour? We all remember against him the death of Uriah : but few take any account of the stricken father, the fugitive king, the self humiliated penitent, his head bowed under the veil of mourning, his feet torn upon the stony ways, his glory departed from him, and most of all his son turned against him, his son whom he loved. Not only the death of Uriah, but many an error besides was no doubt in David's mind, and that sense of supreme failure which is so bitter in the heart of a parent whose children are unkind and undutiful : — the consciousness of weak indulgence, misplaced severity, of a house which, like the house of God, must be purified.

and when the mournful party came to a halt, the liberal succours afforded both by friends and former enemies—the King of Ammon among others, with generous forgetfulness of old feuds, sending supplies to the camp—must have softened the first sensation of unmitigated distress, as the necessity for exertion in itself and the experience of every new event must always do more or less. David was still so self-abased in his keen consciousness of Divine chastisement, that he would permit no vengeance to be taken upon the vulgar abuse of Shimei who threw stones at him as he passed. “Behold, my son seeketh my life: how much more now may this Benjamite do it?” he says as he passes on.

In the meantime a terrible scene was being enacted in Jerusalem, one of insult and affront to the king, which is inconceivable to modern minds, not to speak of individual shame and horror, which is never taken account of at all in any primitive record. The distracted city had not stopped its weeping for David when Absalom and his train came clanging up the steep ascent making the walls ring with their shoutings, and the noise of their cavalcade. The women at the windows with the tears not dried in their eyes, would yet, no doubt, flash forth a glance of welcome at the newcomer, the handsome Absalom in himself a spectacle to drive care away. He who had all the charm that had distinguished his father in his youth would not be wanting, we may be sure, in salutations flung here and there on every side, at each familiar face, the touch of his rapid hand from his breast to his brow, heart and head engaged in the old allegorical greeting—with all his young men after him, flushed with excitement and daring, and the hope of advancement to come. The crowd would gaze and sway and

bility of forgetting that any one is injured, in the satisfaction of restored brightness and triumph. And the throng would surge on after him, pushing up the streets, pouring out of every house, towards the palace which stood vacant in the guardianship of those ten poor women—empty for any man to seize and take possession of it. One wonders whether that dark counsellor by Absalom's side, a mere speck among the bravery of the brilliant train, had wrongs or slights to avenge against David who knew his force, at least, whether he had employed him or not? or if it were mere cold wisdom and policy which dictated his advice?<sup>1</sup> Ahithophel was



own house and his people was all that Absalom wanted. But now that he was undeceived there was no indulgence in Joab's heart. Had he been a man of policy alone we might imagine that the certainty that Absalom so long as he lived would be a standing danger to the crown, was what moved him most: but though his strong sense made that too apparent to him, Joab had thus more poignant reasons still for being remorseless towards Absalom who had deceived him.

Nothing could be more vivid, or more touching, than the picture of the setting out of the forces from their city of refuge to meet the rebels. The king was not allowed to go forth with them.

that if he found that dainty gallant in his way there should be short shrift. Thus the army went forth to the battle.

And David "sat between the two gates." He was still the light of Israel, not to be risked in such a conflict, and perhaps his heart was too faint with the unnatural struggle, to seek a point of vantage whence he could see the approach of the messengers or the far-off dust of the battle. **H**e sat where he could catch the first runner from the field, and hear the first news, but not see, perhaps, the rush of fugitives retiring, perhaps his son dragged hither a prisoner. When the watchman called out from above that some one was visible on the way and that his running was like that of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, the king in his anxiety answered that his news must be good for he was a good man: but it was not Ahimaaz, but the blunt Cushi, the other Levite whom Joab, not loving him it would seem, had charged with that dire news, who told it. David did not ask what was the issue of the fight, he said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" What did kingdom or crown matter in that awful moment—his son, his son! And how many a heartbroken man and woman, father and mother, have echoed that cry of anguish after him, which burst from his lips when the tale of victory was told. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!" would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" Earth and Heaven are silent before that cry—there is no more





son!" This was the cry that the returning victors heard as they came back triumphant to the gates of the city, where, no doubt, the scared and sorrowful people were standing about, wrung to the heart by that outcry. The music stopped, the warriors huddled together, feeling, each man, as if he were a murderer. They broke out of their ranks and "gat them by stealth into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle." Nothing could be added that would not diminish the wonderful effect of such a description. The day

sat in the gate, and received the captains who came before him, discouraged, with drooping crests, and such of the warriors as had not dispersed already, half indignant, half sorry to their homes. All that he could do to make up for his momentary failure it is clear that he did, but probably with but partial effect. And it is equally clear that Joab, never beloved, was in disgrace from that day. No doubt David heard of the personal share he had in the slaying of Absalom, and resented doubly on this account the abrupt disturbance of his seclusion by the very man who had struck the blow. He made overtures to Amasa, who had been Absalom's general, with some thought of policy perhaps, but assuredly more in bitterness and deep resentment. He would have nothing more to say to those sons of Zeruiah, who had always been as thorns in his flesh. When Amasa failed him, or seemed to fail, on a later occasion, it was to Abishai, the less important brother and not to Joab, whom David turned. But it was not long before that determined man regained, in his usual unscrupulous way by bloodshed and force, the command which was evidently his by right of nature. Whatever private feeling might do or say this great general was not to be put aside or ignored.

David came back to Jerusalem in a kind of melancholy triumph. He would have no vengeance taken upon the miserable Shimei who came down, like a cur, to the bank

tress. His conduct to Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, whom he had protected all his life is less creditable: he had made a hasty promise of all that his master possessed to Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, who had hurried after him on his flight with provisions for the retinue, and a false story of his master's hopes of recovering the kingdom. When the lame prince came hurrying out to the gates to meet the king, David—his heart heavy no doubt as he approached that fateful place where such orgies had been held in his absence, where Absalom had flashed through his brief reign of a day, where all the events of that brilliant young life, which was now over in trouble and shame, had taken place.

Perhaps it gave him a little ease to thrust poor Mephibosheth from him, Mephibosheth who had understanding, who did not insist, but fell back from the path of the

careless cruelty practised by Absalom, and by almost every usurper, the last affront that could be offered to a deposed monarch without any consideration of the immediate victims; and on the next find a woman negotiating for her city, describing herself with the confidence of an assured superiority as "one of those who are peaceable and faithful in Israel." "A mother in Israel." The same anomaly, however, still exists in the East. It is no doubt an instance of the great power of individual character in the primitive conditions of life.

There are other details of David's life into which we can scarcely enter. His conduct to the house of Saul had been hitherto almost free of reproach: but it is har-

made his people great, he welded the tribes together as never had been done before, and made a united kingdom of the differing clans and districts which had been so apt each to fall into a little local centre of its own. He turned the little Jebusite city into a capital, distinct in the history of the world, and to be renowned through all time. It was he in whose fertile mind first rose the conception of that great Temple, which was one of the marvels of the ancient world. And whatever the caviller and critic may say in the uncertain, often mistaken, constantly superseded suggestions of their science, which at the best cannot be more than conjecture, there can surely be no evidence half so weighty as the tradition of his race and the internal witness of these noble poems, against his character as a poet. After thousands of years even his words, the expressions of feeling which belong to his life rather than to his works, his wail for Absalom, his remonstrances with Saul—come to our lips still as the expression of our deepest emotions. And no other poet, not even Shakespeare, has entered so deeply into the hearts of all men. The race of mankind has “considered the heavens” for all these centuries, yet has never found anything so magnificent to say of them as the words in which the shepherd of Bethlehem, the King of Israel, described the sun as coming like a bridegroom out of his chamber, and rejoicing like a giant to run his race. The astronomer may tell us that the sun does not move, that the description is inaccurate, just as the philologist tells us, but on far inferior evidence, that the Psalm is the interpolation of some nameless scribe. But the astronomer is a fool for his pains: for to us mortals as long as we live under the conditions of earth, the sunrise and the sunset are as certain as our own existence. And the moon and the stars which fill the

unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge, are to us as they were to the ancient singer, the lamps of heaven, the lights of this little earth—of which we are not more sure in our advanced knowledge that it is but an atom in boundless space, than he felt it to be in his sublime ignorance when he cried in the midst of that overwhelming glory “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” What Newton, what Herschel could say more?

Thus said David, if the evidence of the most carefully preserved records in the world are not altogether without truth: and if, what is more infallible still, the indications of true literary criticism, the truth to nature, th-



whom his own familiar friend, his almost father in one case, his favourite son in the other, had turned. In both cases that quick overwhelming movement and sudden despair has something cowardly in them to our more self-restrained and impulse-concealing race.

But it is this very play of feeling which makes him so full of attraction, so supreme in the affections of his surroundings, that the historian translates his charm and fascination of nature by that superlative phrase. His life is a poem from beginning to end, not a point in it which does not touch the spectator. His early youthful imaginative valour, that quintessence of boyish daring which made of him at once fresh from the sheer

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of a cornice; or arranging with Asaph and his men the service that was to be, the chorus and antiphon, the adagio and allegro of the music, and how to fit to its primitive strain the verses which critics tell us are so rude and ill-adapted for music, of his primitive Hebrew—which nevertheless must have been the best Hebrew going in that day or long after, as it has ranked among the noblest poetry going through all the centuries since then. But a chill would seem to have come over that bright spirit in his later years. It is no strain of the imagination to believe that it was said in Jerusalem of the king that after the death of Absalom he never laid up his head.

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“In Him will I trust :  
 He is my shield,  
 And the horn of my salvation,  
 My refuge, and my tower.

“I will call upon the Lord,  
 Worthy to be praised :  
 So shall I be saved from mine enemies.

“The waves of death compassed me about,  
 The floods of ungodly men  
 Made me afraid ;

“The sorrows of hell compassed me about ;  
 The snares of death  
 Stood in my way ;

“In my distress I called upon the Lord,  
 And cried unto my God :  
 And He heard my voice,  
 And my cry entered into His ears.”

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“I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them ;  
 I have consumed them, and wounded them :  
 Yea, they are fallen under my feet.

“For Thou hast girded me with strength for the battle :  
 Them that rose up against me  
 Hast Thou subdued under me.

“Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth,  
 I did stamp them as the mire of the street,  
 And spread them abroad as the dust before the wind.”

“For who is God,  
 Save the Lord ?  
 And who is a rock,  
 Save our God ?

“God is my strength and power ;  
 He maketh my way perfect,  
 And my feet swift as the hinds’.

With such strains as these the Levites answered to each other in their companies, and the harps and the psalteries thrilled the air, while the king in his high place, and the warriors fresh from battle stood by, and the concourse of the women, a many-coloured crowd, moved and murmured through the courts outside, around the folded curtains which concealed the Ark, the symbol of God's protecting presence and of so many victories past. But David though he gave expression to this cry of triumph went back mirthless to his house with death in his heart.

One great public ceremonial still remained in the life

of David. It had been left unperformed to all the

princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of the companies that ministered to the king by course, and the captains over the thousands, and the captains over the hundreds, and the stewards over all the substance and possessions of the king, and of his sons, with the officers, and with the mighty men, and with all the valiant men, unto Jerusalem." He called together, as we should say, the great officials of the kingdom, his ministers, the heads of departments, his privy-councillors and officers in high command, the great men of the nation, with the military element preponderating as was natural—and presented to them his young son, most probably to the great surprise of many, and no doubt to the dismay and confusion of the elders of the family, and especially of Adonijah who was now the firstborn, after the death of Absalom. The king himself would seem to have felt that an explanation was necessary of this choice. When he rose to address that assembly he reminded them how he himself had been selected for the royal dignity: first Judah "chosen to be the ruler; and of the house of Judah, the house of my father; and among the sons of my father He liked me to make me king over Israel." Among the assembly there must have been many who remembered well the place which David had held in his father's house; and all present were of course aware that he was the youngest, and that his elder brothers had served submissively in his array after the first shock of his high distinction over them. When he had thus established the antecedent, he set forth before them the reason of his choice, which was that Solomon had been elected by God to build His house.

It would seem that this house of God must have become by this time an object of enthusiasm with Israel.

and his disappointment, and the promise that had been made to him: and the object had become a national one, kept always before the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the provincial visitors to the capital by the immense preparations which David was making, the hewing of the great blocks of stone, the carvings which were intended for the interior, the treasures of gold and silver which were laid up for the decoration of that wonderful place. Jerusalem must have been pervaded with the odour of the cedar which was measured and piled up in masses of fragrant planks and pillars: and throughout all Israel the women must have been at work wherever there was one who was skilful in embroidery, on some vestment or curtain.

the depths of the country, what encouragement to every industry, what comfort to every heart! “I will give him rest from all his enemies round about: I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days: for his name shall be Solomon.” It was in itself a promise and assurance to make the harassed land rejoice.

When the king had made this oration he showed to his assembled counsellors the preparations he had made, the masses of hewn stone all ready for the building, the treasury full of precious metals, the jewels, onyxes and glistening “stones of divers colours” and marble in abundance, and gold to overlay the walls of that precious house that was to be. He showed them what had been the work of all his later life, his collections of every kind, the results of endless labour and thought. And fired as they must have been by the sight and by his glowing words, and invitation to all to take their part in this great national undertaking, the princes and the chiefs brought in their turn whatever they had that was precious to add to the store, jewels no doubt from many a source, taken from the necks of many a captive, carpets of glorious colours, embroideries upon which the women at home had spent their patient lives. The wife working in the cool of the day at the tent door or on the steps of her house had her share like her lord. There was a national contribution “offered willingly” from all the chiefs and the head men, and the treasuries of the unbuilt Temple were filled to overflowing.

This was the last great public act of David’s life. He set his favourite project splendidly on foot, and settled the succession of his kingdom, and made every arrangement for the splendour of the age to come; and then the princes dispersed—the parliament was closed, the keys turned on the stores. Solomon went back to the quietude

kingdom as his advancing age permitted: and then came that pause which occurs continually in every history, the interval of every day between the past and future, which happily has no record, which is only our human life.

Almost the last stage of all seems to have been reached in David's life, when another sudden disturbance came upon the capital, dispersing the somewhat heavy and ominous calm which hung over it, the weary suspense of an ending life. David was old, shut up in his chamber under the charge of his young nurse, unable for the weight of sovereignty, and rarely seen, we may believe, in the city of which he was the life and pride: and all men had grown weary of the waiting, the pause in those

as well as that of the nation, to set aside the foolishness of his old age, and establish a successor after him who should follow the old conquering traditions, and continue the old warlike life. What was this boy Solomon that he should be chosen from among the lowest ranks of the family, over the head of the gallant prince who was the true heir? Abiathar was of the same mind, the priest who had been faithful to David through all his troubles, who had been with him in the wilderness, and among the Philistines, sharing all the evil as well as the good of his life. It is very probable that even among the priesthood there were two parties, one maintaining that a tabernacle for the Ark was all that God had ordained, that the Temple was but a dream, and all the silver and gold more fit to be divided among the chiefs and people than to be appropriated to this visionary use. To what purpose is this waste? Probably both Joab and Abiathar conceived that it would be far more to the glory of Israel to diffuse such wealth among the people than to accumulate it in this one place, and alienate it from the use of man in order to appropriate it to that of God, to whom it was as the dust of the field. And Adonijah was the legitimate heir. They were the true royalists, the legitimists of their day, the Conservatives, or rather the Tories, of Israel, determined against all innovations. And there is no doubt that they had no少数人 on their side as well as force, with the high priest and the commander-in-chief at their head, while David dozed over the fire in his chamber in the chill and lethargy of his old age. They might easily conclude that they were delivering him, too, from the plotters about him, from the influence of Bathsheba and Nathan, who had procured the elevation of that other young pretender to the throne.

These great leaders, however, reckoned without their

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seems to have been more than seventy, which is by no

had abdicated, the fortunate prince who was to build the house of God, and make Israel glorious; and while the fading fire lasted gave him a few fierce brief counsels, hot and bitter with that anger of old age which is all the more strong that it has no longer any personal potency. All that Joab had done came before him in a flash of angry recollection, the death of Abner, the death of Amasa—who can doubt, above all, the death of Absalom. “Do thou therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his head go down to the grave in peace.” Was this charge so dreadful as appears to us? Joab had served David well, but he had never admitted any obstacle to his private vengeance, and he was the most dangerous foe that young Solomon could have while yet unassured upon the throne. That there should have come into the old king’s mind after this his own bitter enemy and reviler, the Benjaminite, who had thrown jibes and curses and stones at him on his flight from Jerusalem, is more difficult to understand. Perhaps the recollection flitted across his failing mind in the temporary fury which the name of Joab had raised. He had forgiven Shimei in order not to stain with blood the day of his return to Jerusalem; but had, perhaps, seen reason since to regret his clemency, and felt Shimei, too, to be a danger and probable enemy to the new king. Upon this subject we can only conjecture. The charge leaves a painful impression on the mind as of a man who could not in policy avenge his own quarrels, but left the legacy of blood to his son. It can only be said that not in these days nor for long centuries after had the nobler thought that injuries were to be forgiven, not avenged, been committed to man; as also that the flicker of suddenly raised passion through decrepitude, the last fierce impulse of a failing mind, and temporary madness, often overclouds the face of sound sense, and estranges

Here is a softer recollection, with which to take leave of the hero, the song with which the words and the days of the son of Jesse came to an end. “Now these be the last words of David”—the young king, his eyes full of ardour and of melancholy, the newly anointed, the great thinker and poet of days to come, sitting thoughtfully by.

“He that ruleth over men should be just,  
Ruling in the fear of God.

“And he shall be as the light of the morning,  
When the sun riseth.  
A morning without clouds ;

“Like the tender grass out of the earth

## CHAPTER IV.

### SOLOMON.

THE traditional character of Solomon, the greatest potentate and philosopher of the East, the man above all others who has influenced the development of that vast world of sentiment, passion and thought which the passage of centuries has scarcely made more comprehensible to us, the world of the subtle Jew and the dreamy, yet fierce Mohammedan was as different from that of his father as can well be imagined. In such wonderful figures there is certainly no heredity. How the warrior of the desert, the shepherd of the hills and valleys, the paladin and hero of romance who was his predecessor, could have produced that man of observation and thought, that great spectator of the ages, who was at the same time so great an actor on the far distant and crowded stage that it is difficult to conceive how little Judea could have contained him—is beyond the imagination of man. He rises in that dim distance the first-born of all the philosophers, arriving at conclusions which the latest have done little more than carry out: the first great thinker, whose musings have breathed through the whole world, neither corrected nor rendered obsolete by all advancing lore or increasing wisdom of mankind. What progress that race has made since then! how changed are all our conditions! there is no comparison

between the circumstances of well-being which surround the poorest among us and those precarious and painful

history and invented, to their own glory, a whole line of visionary kings: but how far are they behind the splendid fictionists (according to the critics) who flourished nameless among those primitive Jews! for Scots historians put no immortal poetry into the mouth of their fabulous Fergus, no essence of human wisdom to the credit of any Achaius. Solomon and his philosophy, and David and his Psalms on the contrary are rooted among the deepest certainties of the wide Eastern world

to take. Adonijah's guests, in all their bravery, had gone by but a few hours before to the great feast in the valley which the splendid heir-presumptive, the legitimate successor, was giving—and what was this young prince, the man of peace, undistinguished yet by either valour or greatness?

The crowd must have gathered dumbly after him, pouring down to the door of the tabernacle. But when the priest came out from within the mysterious curtains with the consecrated oil, and in the sight of all men anointed the grave young king, a sudden enthusiasm would seem to have seized the crowd. The sound of the uproar in the city blew downward upon the wind to th

salem looking on, that this new king though a man of

The burning flesh was a sweet savour unto the Lord. Close examination, however, shows that the amount thus consumed was comparatively small, so that, perhaps, the trial to the, in this respect not very keen, perceptions of the East, might not have been nearly so great as we suppose.

standing heart in every sense of the words, his works





accumulation of industries must have been going on for years during the reign of David, who had set the masons to work to hew the stones, and "prepared iron in abundance for the nails, for the doors of the gates and for the joinings, and brass in abundance without weight"—not to speak of the designs minutely prepared, and the calculations of quantities and values required. How far we may trust to the numbers and statements of weight it would be difficult to say, for nothing is so likely to have suffered in the course of innumerable transcriptions as these details, which in many cases, and especially in the successive numberings of the people, seem inconceivably

future manipulators of European finance had found out the way of exchanging the productions of their vassals, the Gibeonites and Jebusites, who laboured the fields and worked the winepress and crushed the oil-berries for them, for the manufactures of the trading Tyrians, and



est raid, expanded in one generation into a great city enlarged and beautified towards which the wealth of the

with a sigh for the good old times, when his own Jebusite chief held the little town, and all was silence around: and so, too, must have thought the group of old soldiers who would look out, contemptuous, upon all those arts of peace, and remind each other of the stirring trumpet notes when great Joab, now dead and gone, or greater David, had called them together and led them down, with clang of sword and shimmer of spear, down into the plain to victory and spoil.

But while these old Conservatives had their grumble apart, what robust life must have poured through the land where everybody was busy, what commotion and activity in all the streets! Solomon, the young king, had other tastes than his father. He made a splendid alliance with the greatest of ancient kingdoms, bringing Pharaoh's daughter to his palace on the hill, not contenting himself with any wayside beauty as his father had done—Pharaoh's daughter, a descendant of the race which had made slaves of Israel, and which had suffered so sorely by means of that strange and irreconcilable people! What greater proof could be of the new position of Israel and the final place which she had won for herself among the nations of the earth when the great King of Egypt did not despise her alliance? The Egyptian princess would come with new luxuries and splendours in her train, always adding to the rising tide of wealth and work and universal embellishment. And as the seasons went on, and year followed year, the great building growing on the hill would gradually absorb the interest of Jerusalem, a perpetual object of observation and criticism and remark, of national enthusiasm and pride. No one could look out from the windows of the palace, from the heads of the steepest streets, from any houses, ten or fifteen without seeing before him the rising

slowly growing in whiteness and noble proportion like a magic dwelling. The great stones must have been dragged up the hill with shoutings and outeries of men, and labouring breath of animals taking their share, they, too, in their voiceless way, in the offering; but once there, were poised, without noise of building, one upon another in their courses without sound of the hammer or any tool. It would become the first idea in the morning with all that highly-stimulated and excited people to look out and see how much had been done in the previous twenty-four hours, what new doorway had become visible, what sculptured lintel added, or wing of cherub, or wreath of pomegranate. And what exertions there

corner of the hill, and deep down in the valley the old, old group of hoary trees which mark Gethsemane, that spot full of awe and anguish. But no such knowledge was in the mind of the lighthearted groups which must have leant over to see the huge courses of new-laid stones, the men explaining, the women wondering as in any holiday expedition of to-day. These blocks of deep-

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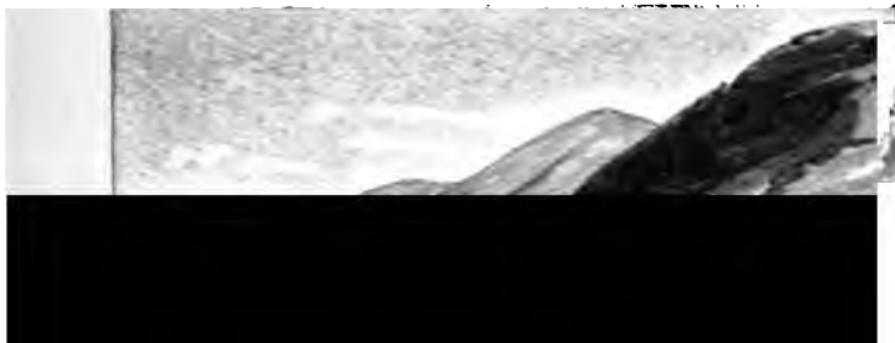
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of stones, the cargoes of wood from Jaffa, all the ruder labours necessary. The number of these original inhabitants, sometimes holding their own in spurts of little wars, as the Jebusites had held their town against David, sometimes tolerated and linked by bonds of familiarity and neighbourhood with the conquering race, never so oppressed as were, for example, the Saxons by the Normans.



man. Neither mules nor camels could carry conveniently the great logs of cedar, still less drag forth the blocks of stone from the quarries, therefore it must in some cases have been by sheer hard labour of scores of men that the transport was accomplished. All this heavy work would seem to have been laid upon the tributaries, the aborigines of the country. "Of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen," but the Amorites, Hittites, Perrizites, Hivites, and Jebusites were levied *en masse* for this forced service. The corvée would lose its unpopularity when thus exacted from the natural vassals, and it does not appear that any rebellious sentiment arose among those labouring crowds. The Israelites filled their places of overseers and captains, and they were sent to Lebanon, to the wood-cutting, in relays, their period of service being one month in three.

How far all this quickened life and increase of work and activity was to the real advantage and enrichment of the land, however, it is very difficult to decide. A splendid capital is a glory to a well established and stedfastly governed kingdom, but it is doubtful whether the Israelites were sufficiently tamed and civilised to appreciate it, or whether the distant shores of Zebulon and Naphtali, the outlying tribes of Gad and Dan would care much for what went on upon the heights of that far-off Jerusalem. The inhabitants of these regions were described as "people that walked in darkness" so much later as the times of Isaiah, and it is scarcely possible to imagine that they could have felt a great interest in the labours at Jerusalem, for the sake of which they were called upon to join the band of labourers, which made its way every month through their country to Lebanon, unless indeed it might be sweetened by pay and reward, as is doubtful. Yet even that train, trudging in its detinements under

must have caused a thrill of life and mutual acquaintance through all the tribes as it went and came, with its new experiences, so much to tell of Jerusalem on one hand, and of the mountains on the other : not to speak of the wonders of the caravans from Egypt, the reports of the shipmen who went so far into fabulous lands across incredible seas. The country folk must have looked for the passing of that train with all the excitement of rustics to whom a glimpse into other worlds is thus afforded periodically. It is said in our own days that nothing has so welded the newly formed kingdom of Italy into one, as the military service which carries the Neapolitan into the cities of the north and makes the hardheaded Pier'

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record does not enter into these details. The voyages themselves are wonder enough, the earliest record of extended trading and the navigation of the unknown seas. And even the briefness of the statement adds to its interest. What strange novelty, unknown to us, who have so little left to surprise us, what excitement must have been in that vague blundering about those brilliant seas, what tragic experiences of cyclone and tempest, what loitering in strange places, waiting upon wind and weather, in the long, long wandering of those three



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*Solomon 2. Those to whom these notes relate, or*

wealth for their sakes, but never once as in this case to give up to them the dearer fame of poem or work of genius. Such a piece of self-effacement is unknown to any other language, to any race that ever existed. No Greek gave the credit even of a ballad to the tyrant of his state, or cut off his own name from the admiration and knowledge of posterity in order to give fictitious glory to his master. On what inducement the poets of Judea in the dawn of consciousness should have done so, why they were so far different (being so curiously like in other particulars the most tenacious and self-seeking of men) to all other human beings, is too deep a question for the ordinary intelligence. We prefer to receive them, as at least from the inspiration of Solomon, whether they may have been written out or not, by his own hand. We are told that "he spake" of many things upon which his utterances have perished: beasts and birds, and trees and plants. The botany and natural history, curious as they would have been, we can do without. The greater

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*the temporary estrangements, the mutual adoration o*

"How shall I your true love ken  
From another one."

The sentiment is universal and runs through all the ages. He is the chiefest among ten thousand: and of her she is but one, the choice one of her mother: "there is none like her, none." Sometimes she is even terrible in her beauty "like an army with banners" to the adoring lover. The Jerusalem that comes vaguely into sight behind these two beautiful figures is settled and orderly, the slopes of its hills covered with gardens, its inner economy safe and sure:—beyond its walls, stretching out in the valleys, lie pleasant fields full of vines and pomegranates and apple-trees: the rural paths are sweet with flowers, lilies above all, of which it was said a thousand years after, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these: a delightful link of association between that far-distant scene and the past, less remote, which is so much more momentous and dear. The great singer who made the song may not have been Solomon, it may have been out of pure loyalty to enhance his monarch's name that he allowed it to be attributed to Solomon; or there may be collected in it, strung upon the exquisite thread of its little drama, other utterances of primitive song in celebration of other beloveds. But it is full of unity from beginning to end. Its passion is legitimate and chastened, not hot with anxiety or any suggestion of the clandestine. It is a song of espousals, of love with no darker shadow in it than the passing clouds, the little evasions, the keen momentary pang of a meeting missed or a visit

stands on the eminence of maturity and experience, has by his own showing sought with ardour all the triumphs and pleasures of life, and tasted every joy, and fathomed every sweetness. Such a man of all others is most like to have expanded himself at once in the refinements and the ardours of sentiment, and could scarcely have fallen into the monotonous garbage of so-called passion during that youth of genius and high aspiration "feeding among the lilies" which was capable of so much finer things. He had now seen the emptiness of all. Romance had died out from him: his Shulamite had become like other women, his Egyptian princess a fellow-creature moved with like passions as himself. In all the other pursuits





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E GOLDEN GATE.



or destitution below. Whether there had never been any  
*others whether they had been swept out of his house by*



—has not perceived till now that the work and labour were the joy, and not the always imperfect, never accomplished end. To rejoice in his labour because God answereth him in the joy of his heart! Here is the one thing that is not vanity. It is in the happiness of making, of producing, of exercising all the faculties that God has given, of conceiving in his heart and working out with his hands the work which he loves. A smile comes even upon that sorrowful face at the thought of the working days, the peaceful evening of rest, the awaking to all the joys of active life. No more beautiful picture of the cheerful tenor of the common life, the

was more happy than he who accomplished everything. But yet Solomon would not have had this revelation had not he, too, recollections of the fulness of his career, when he worked with all his might at whatsoever his hand found to do, and rejoiced in his labour, and found every day too short for the work that filled it. How little he had thought of that in his eager pressing towards the end, towards the result! Yet it was his

that is not vanity: that a man should take pleasure in the doing of his work: that he should rejoice in his

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his choice. the most delicate homage that could be ren-

the idolatries that seem to have had at all times so many attractions for light and unwary spirits. The Jewish priests and conservators were like those reformers who looked on with angry and jealous eyes at the royal chapel in which the foreign queen had to be permitted to hear her mass, whatever reasons there might be against it. The reasons were infinitely stronger on the side of the Jews. But with Solomon, who probably looked on all those clinging dependents round him with a certain contempt as far too slight creatures to affect any man except for the fleeting moment of their beauty and empire over his senses—it is not difficult to understand the facility with which he might be persuaded to provide for each

Astarte herself meaning nothing more terrible even to

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the darker sentence that "all is vanity" has been adopted by acclaim, a conclusion in which he has simply fore stalled every generation of his successors, and all the wise men who have followed him. But this, too, is the burden of Solomon, not less emphatic:—that the joy of life is in the doing: that the gift of God is that satisfaction which lies in a man's work and the exercise of his faculties: that he who does with all his might what his hand finds to do, is the happy man. The sage and the fool, alike, hurry over that wholesome happiness of the daily round, despising it, looking for something better, for some pitiful result, some poor achievement which is to make them demigods among men. And

## CHAPTER V.

### THE KINGS OF JUDAH.

**T**HREE could be no more tremendous comment upon that conclusion of Solomon's philosophy than the history of his own house and kingdom. The life of this great prince was wholly occupied in building up and assuring the monarchy which his father had founded. He had entered upon an inheritance full of embarrassment and care, with an elder brother in semi-rebellion, and the great chief of his army, the head of all warlike enterprise in Israel opposed to him—while himself still young, untried, upon the top of that wave of fickle popular enthusiasm upon which no one can calculate for more than a moment. He had upon his shoulders as his chief charge, his *raison d'être*, so to speak, the building of that great Temple which, no doubt, was to many a devout imagination, and of which, perhaps, very few foresaw the future importance as the one centre and rallying ground for the national spirit and heart. Solomon had before him the tremendous task not only of building that Temple, but of making it accepted of the people—the distant tribes who acknowledged his sway, but knew nothing of his Jerusalem, and who had their own favourite shrines and altars, sanctified by great names over all the country, and perhaps saw no necessity for that centralisation of worship. This work, as happens with so

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much great national work, besides the glory and joy of

extraordinary inconsistency is, however, even less amazing than the possibility of a downfall of the kind in such

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industries, the work in Lebanon, the pressgang, perhaps,

to enter into the troubled and often confused story which is in many respects the most like a collection of legends strung upon a spare thread of history of anything in the Scriptures. The story of the prophets Elijah and Elisha contained some of the finest and most picturesque scenes and some of the most rude and trivial. Nothing can exceed the majesty of the lonely figure in the desert, his head wrapped in his cloak, his soul enveloped in darkness, who stands before the great invisible God through thunder and earthquake in an extraordinary mingling of submission and defiance, with a proud desolation and sense of abandonment which is a reproach to his Maker, “I, I alone am left” :—neither is there anything more wonderful in those ancient records than the still small voice which is the voice of God, nor that which it says, a statement so unexpected, an answer which cuts the very ground from the feet of the self-absorbed and self-asserting prophet: “Yet have I seven thousand men in Israel who have not bent the knee to Baal.” Human folly and faithlessness in the midst even of heroic suffering and solitude, confronted with the great calm and knowledge of all secrets which are in the fathomless consciousness of the Divine, were never more exquisitely or more surprisingly set forth. But on the other hand the atmosphere of miracle which surrounds Elisha brings us back from those primeval wilds with something of the same feeling with which we regard the petty prodigies of a mediæval saint in which mere convenience is sufficient warrant for a breach of the laws of nature, and the sacred workman fatigued hangs his axe upon a sunbeam, with a comfortable composure which reaches the length of absurdity. The almost complete freedom of the miracles of Scripture from this continually recurring

only lost, I think, and for a very short time, in the confused, probably abridged and bewildering narrative of a period of anarchy and trouble. This history of continual overthrow and re-establishment, the reign of might over right,—in which such supremacy as there was, was within the reach of every strong man that might arise, and no principle of patriotism or fealty survived to protect the distracted race,—lasted for some hundred and fifty years: when Israel was obliterated by the Assyrians and their race and record swept off without recovery. That those “seven thousand”—a numeral of multitude not to be rigidly interpreted—the undefiled souls, incapable of infidelity, who were safe in perfect understanding of their God,

wherever they

those days were part of the economy of moral government, the strong and unmistakable language of a typical and primitive age. “But Israel would not hear, my people would not consider.” The ferocity of nature, the wild forces of rebellion and anarchy, the impure religions that were the special affliction and temptation of the time, swept like a flood over the people, who had not

have entertained a grudge against his supplacers, and set up its grievance as a motive for withdrawal more keen than any other of the tribes could claim, should be the one faithful to the house of David which had humiliated and overthrown its chief: but perhaps the local bond, and the fact that Jerusalem was within its borders

their very gates before they gathered, cowed and vacillating, round the king whom they had already so sorely misled.

“Oh for one hour of Wallace wight  
Or well-tried Bruce to rule the fight !”

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pursued among the Hebrews, who were nothing if not religious, with greater fervour than among the careless peoples who knew no better—involved debasement in every characteristic faculty: yet, no doubt, all was worked out according to the ordinary rules of life without bearing any specially miraculous character in the eyes of those to whom it was the course of every day.

And there were great princes in the line of rulers who succeeded each other for nearly three hundred years, son following father with an extraordinary continuance, while the other kingdoms about rose and fell, and Israel, the prey of one victorious captain after another, at last disappeared altogether from the scene. Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, brought back something of the wealth and supremacy of Solomon's days again and again to the city among the hills: they had their little wars, sometimes against their brethren of the other tribes, sometimes against the old traditional foes of Ammon and Edom and Moab. And in the midst of these there suddenly rose up against them a more powerful enemy, the new scourge of the East, the great empire which had appeared like a portent marching from the north over the necks of all the lesser sovereignties, the Assyrians who were destined to sweep Israel away, and to make in the end a long eclipse of Jerusalem. But even against this too little Judah held head for a long time, sometimes by diplomacy, sometimes by arms. It was a hard fighting life for the little kingdom which lay surrounded by rivals and enemies, with its little circle of tened cities, its citadel on the hill of Zion, its sanctuary still rich with spoil which might well have attracted envious eyes, amid the other little brigands of nations camping to the east and west, towards the coast of the Mediterranean in one hand, and beyond the Jordan to the other. The

additions and restorations of ornament and wealth as were possible, and the advent of each new monarch of

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a continual battle for His supremacy and poured its heart every denunciation, every scorn that I words could express upon the things of wood and the images which had eyes and saw not, which had and heard not, the god who perhaps was asleep, a journey—last and most tremendous satire of all, was cut from the same tree with which the work made his fire. “He will take thereof and warm hims yea he kindleth it and baketh bread: yea he maket god and worshippeth it.” Why this irreconcilable im erance, this struggle carried on from age to age again every law of natural association, and all the preceder and all the examples around?

The critics can allege no better...  
spiracy of man...  
...

many national convulsions! The other gods would not have objected to share their Olympus, such as it was, with an additional pretender to Divine honours. There need have been no trouble about the matter. A god the more was far less offence than a nationality the more in that crowded area, and what with perpetual bouts of fighting and endless treaties and pacts between themselves in an ever-changing balance of power, these crowded nations managed to exist together and make what progress was possible. But between the great God of heaven and earth and the idols that were stocks and stones there could be no pact or compromise. The fight in this case was unceasing, everlasting. There was no remaining silent while that controversy went on. It was as a fire burning in the veins of him who was compelled to be a witness of the transgression of his people, an iniquity

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for a time, at least, the authorised and established ser-

sion, no doubt, all had been looking with anxiety and hope. The streets of Jerusalem we are warranted in believing are little changed from that day: with the same

inclining often towards each other, keeping out the hot and fervid day: or covered with sombre arcades, here and there debouching into a little opening which shows a blaze of sunlight at the end of the darkness: and now and then penetrated by some arrow of light from a window or slit in the lofty arches overhead. The crowd still streams up and down upon the steep causeway and continual rough steps of stone that dive into the hollow with an abruptness modified by no thought or possibility

priests with the silver trumpets sounded forth a welcome as the procession drew nigh. "And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David the king." What was the song they sang?

"Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised  
In the city of our God,  
In the mountain of His holiness.

"Beautiful for situation,  
The joy of the whole earth,  
Is Mount Zion,

"The city of the great King.  
God is known in her palaces for a refuge."

“I will praise Thee :  
For Thou hast heard me,  
And art become my salvation.

• • • •  
“Blessed be he that cometh  
In the name of the Lord :  
We have blessed you  
Out of the house of the Lord.”

up to the skies with many a heavy bass and many an untrained treble joining in (and, no doubt, also many a sob and outcry of religious fervour) as the multitude poured a long singing—"Open to me the gates of righteousness": and was answered by the clear pealing notes of the educated voices—"Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord," the effect of an appeal and answer so universal, so comprehensible, the real voice of the people and reply of its leaders must have been far greater than the most admirably constructed service. I once heard, in Notre Dame in Paris, at one of the *conférences des hommes*, the Lenten course of instruction which occasionally fills that wonderful church with an assembly of men, thousands together, the great hymn of the *Stabat Mater* sung in plain song, in unison, by the whole assembly. Musical connoisseurs who would have listened with calm criticism to the most perfect performance of Rossini's *chef-d'œuvre*, stood there speechless and could only listen and tremble at the great song that rolled through those noble arches, a volume of sound which the imagination could not but feel more worthy of the ear of God than the most melodious trills and intricate harmonies of all the singing men and singing women in the world. And thus with the wild Oriental note, the cadenced cry of a primitive people, must the renewed service of the Temple have sounded forth, filling the vibrating air and all the hill-tops of Judah with the sound of the worship of a multitude, most imposing and impressive hearing to be had upon this earth.

The same scene with more touching ceremonies still was repeated shortly after, when the first Passover of which we have any account in the histories of Judah as a kingdom, was celebrated. It is a fact much relied

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elaborate ceremonials of Jewish worship were invented.

of the times, or because the other parts of the territory of Israel had been already colonised by foreign races, accomplished only a part of their mission. The posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulon. They were not well received in the house of Joseph: "They laughed them to scorn and mocked them" we are told. "Nevertheless divers of Asher and Manasseh and of Zebulon humbled themselves, and came to Jerusalem"—the remnant of humble and faithful people which is always left in every period of national apostacy. Had the passover been a new thing this call to the scattered Israelites would have been mere arrogant folly alienating instead of conciliating: for what interest could Ephraim or the other tribes have had in a new invention of the Jews?

From all the immediate country, the land of Judah and Benjamin, the households came, with that united force of religious feeling and of the pleasure of a national holiday which is in every pilgrimage. Those who have seen the curious groups that come up from the country to Jerusalem now, in slow and silent progress, the women mounted high upon the camel, sometimes sheltered by a strange little tent which sways and shakes with every long measured step like a boat at sea, the man armed to the teeth, with his feeble old musket slung over his shoulder, his pistol and knife in his belt, mounted upon the ass which always heads the procession, or walking by its side—can form some idea of what the travelling pilgrims must have looked like, as in solitary families or groups and combinations from town and village they came along towards the white walls and towers gleaming on the hillside, and visible far off from the direction of Israel, from all the paths that led from the north. The religion of Mohammed in its skilful

pilgrimage from Jerusalem to the so-called tomb of Moses, which makes a sort of balance to the feasts of the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter, and thus calls together a crowd of pious Mussulmans to hold in check the other crowds that pour into Jerusalem at that season. And it is among the pilgrim groups, which come from the distant desert and many a far-off village, for this ceremonial that the most perfect picture of the primitive pilgrimage is furnished. The pilgrim from Asshur or Zebulon would have no rifle, no pistol, in his belt, with which to defend his household—but he would have his knife, his spear, perhaps a bow slung at his back, and his cloak of camel's hair. In the morning he would

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down sound carried off into continuity by this imperceptible

which the existing Tower of David may give some idea. Hezekiah himself had "repaired the wall where it was broken, and raised it up to the towers, and another wall without, and repaired Millo in the city of David, and made darts and shields in abundance." He had even diverted the course of the waters which supplied Jerusalem and stopped up the fountains, that there might be no water for the besiegers. Perhaps some of the uncouth machines "invented by cunning men to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones withal," might still remain in their old places—means of desperate defence such as that made in later times when the Jews fought every step of their doomed town and fortress against all the strength of the Roman army—so that the town was fully fortified and as able, perhaps, to encounter a siege as any small and crowded town subject to blockade on all sides by overpowering numbers could be. But that was little even in days before artillery was invented: and the heavy hearts of the Jewish ministers may well be imagined as they went out to meet the embassy which had arrived outside the walls, at the head of some portion of Sennacherib's army, enough to frighten into submission the little royal town which could never have held head against so great an invader. Sennacherib himself was besieging Lachish in the plains, the capital of the Philistines; and there was in the mission of his general an unfeigned contempt for the strength of Jerusalem, an estimate that the mere sight of the Assyrians would strike terror to the Jewish soul. "He stood by the corner of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field," having apparently made a circuit to the western side of the city circling that corner, "the turning of the wall," and arriving at last at the point where the wall came in



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Whether he had tried his arguments first upon the representatives of Hezekiah before he lifted his voice, and addressed the crowd upon the walls which had come to gaze and listen to the parley, we are not told: but it is clear that he perceived the advantage of raising a popular panic and gaining the town without fighting.

"In what does Hezekiah trust?" cried the envoy—"in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt? But if thou say to me, We trust in the Lord our God—am I now come up without the Lord against this land to destroy it? The Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it." Rabshakeh was evidently a man aware

well calculated to arouse the smouldering superstitions of all that eager fringe of listeners on the walls. How easy to make them believe that the vengeance of Baal and Astarte had brought this proud invader upon them, and that these offended deities smote by his arm! They besought the Assyrian to speak in his own language, which they could understand, and not in that of the people, the hasty and incompetent judges whose panic might at any moment precipitate matters. But this very prayer was, no doubt, an inducement the more to make Rabshakeh raise his voice and strengthen his argument. "Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words?" he said. "hath he not sent me to the men that sit upon the wall?" "They held their peace, and answered him not a word," says the record.

. . . . But when Hezekiah's ministers had returned within the gates they rent their garments in sign of sorrow and humiliation and with bowed heads went up among the anxious crowds of the people to lay the message of the Assyrian before the king. Hezekiah received them with equal distress and almost despair; for the fate that awaited him and his people whether they yielded or whether they resisted was equally terrible. The best that was offered was that they should be carried away "to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine"; captivity, in any case, with all the horrors which no fine promises could decently wash off, a fate which they had seen to overtake their brethren of Israel. In this terrible conjecture the anxious king and his ministers could take refuge but in one hope—the aid of God—and even that with all the trouble and uncertainty which attends an appeal to the unseen, that soft trembling even in its utmost quietude left perhaps the will of the Saviour. He knew not if not to accept of the

Isaiah, here first introduced into the record, when called upon to answer for the Lord, reassured, however, the trembling questioners. "I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour." With what wondering suspense must these words have been heard! for what rumour could conjure away the substantial might of the

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which it is unnecessary to enter. Perhaps that ejacula-

known in history, poetry full of the sublimest sentiments and endowed with the most beautiful power of expression, besides its claim of prophetic inspiration and of opening the future to the glimpses of men. Such a great figure as Isaiah suddenly arising in a limited circle is assuredly enough,—or at least may appear so to the after historian —to put a stamp upon his age. We know, indeed, that our own great Milton, not to speak of our still greater Shakespeare, made very little immediate difference to the time in which they lived, and owed their greatness to no royal patronage. And we know also, what is perhaps more cognate to the matter, that Isaiah's writings are full of a perpetual protest against his time and appeal to a better to come, as are those of most great religious writers since his time.

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under these inconsiderable princes. And outside the walls of Jerusalem reigned great and contending forces between which no little kingdom could stand: the Egyptians in whose hands one party of the Hebrews would fain have placed themselves, in the hope of escaping the other, the terrible adversary who came from the north. Anarchy and misery arose in the devoted city where no man knew what to do, and least of all the poor puppets of kings, one succeeding another, struggling between the prophets who denounced and the princes who overbore and treated them as nonentities. The question of entire destruction, in the face of an adversary so strong, and in

*the midst of such divided counsels and contending*

state, priests and scribes, and wealthy persons, had already been despatched in melancholy bands at the pleasure of the victors. When they got as far as Riblah, probably coming up there with the victorious army, the sons of Zedekiah were murdered before his eyes, which were thereafter cruelly put out, and he himself carried off in chains to end his days in prison. Thus the king-

## PART II.—THE PROPHETS.

### CHAPTER I.

#### ISAIAH.

IT is understood that all classes of critics, those who believe and receive as well as those who doubt and question, have come to a tolerably general decision that the prophecies of Isaiah should be attributed to two persons —one the Isaiah of Hezekiah, the other an altogether unknown, nameless, and untraceable man. I have made no use of this hypothesis, because it seems to me unnecessary. It is of course difficult to apply the ordinary rules of literary criticism to a work which is only known in a translation: seeing it is always possible that the style of the translators, in this case so admirable and homogeneous, may have obliterated the distinctions of the original. The restoration and return from the often prophesied captivity is indeed more clear in the Is



who was willing to sink his own fame in that of his predecessor, indifferent even to "the last infirmity of noble minds," he, the evangelical prophet, as he has been called, was still farther off from the Man of Sorrows, whom he has described in such sublime strains, than the original Isaiah was from Cyrus. There is no difficulty set at rest, to my mind, by the idea that there were two:—but neither to the English reader or writer is the question one of much importance. If they are two, the world is richer by an example of such humility as it has never known before or since combined with a splendour of genius and inspiration to which the same terms may almost be applied.

The only real basis of probability upon which the conjectures in respect to Hezekiah's age as the first literary age of Hebrew history seems to rest is the fact that there was in his days a remarkable school of prophets—whether associated together or arising individually we have no way of knowing,—what we may call a great outburst of poetry, and of poetry not legendary or associated with the feats of bygone heroes as primitive poetry is in every language, but having reached a much more advanced stage, the poetry of ode and elegy, of eloquence and sentiment, concerned with every moral theme that can stir the imagination or touch the heart. The love-drama, the deep burden of philosophy, the never ending human discussion of the ways of God with men, arose all of them in this wonderfully gifted race before they were either known or thought of by any other. Those silent yet wonderful words which are writ in Egyptian stones, and which have made the thread of primitive history more or less clear, are all tersely historical, the memorials

orderly words—the lyrics, the oratory, the morals, the thought, with an Eastern wealth of metaphor, with a strain and vehemence of passion, with a music and harmony of sound, which in all these centuries and millenniums have never been surpassed. The literature of the Greeks is much later, but yet it is not so universal. It does not touch every note of the harp as does that of the Hebrews—and strangely enough that great literature, the foundation of all modern learning, and in a certain sense the inspiration of the whole world, is far less acquainted with the secrets of the heart, and far less adapted to embody all aspirations and sentiments than that of the Hebrews. *Socrates is great but his voice*

entertains no genial weakness, no impulse of indulgence for the sake of his forefathers—but is still more strong in respect to that strange people in whose words we utter our deepest emotions, and whom in most cases we repudiate and dislike. The effect is a very strange one.

The great outburst, if we may call it so, of Hebrew poetry occurred at a time when the two nations of the Jews had great vicissitudes of power and of downfall, yet as much or more of the former than of the latter. The reign of Uzziah was a great reign until the disaster of the conclusion which was rather personal to the king than affecting the people. And the reign of Hezekiah was also a great reign, full of wealth and progress, and great national deliverances, besides being, if the opinion of the critics is any way to be considered, a sort of Augustan age of literature. The twenty years occupied by the deplorable reign of Ahaz came between, it is true, justifying any kind of lamentation and presage of evil. Yet it must be remembered that throughout this whole period, at its highest as well as its lowest fortune, the tenor of the prophetic utterances, the subject of the impassionate poetical addresses which the poets of Judah and Israel poured forth are invariably the same cry against national degradation and wickedness, the same denunciation of evil to come.

Amos is the first of these great instructors and powerful Protestants against the sin around him. His prophecies were chiefly concerning Israel and were uttered in the period during which Jeroboam II., the son of Joash, reigned in Samaria and Uzziah in Jerusalem, the two reigns being contemporary for fourteen years. Thus it was in the latter years of the King of Israel, a great prince by whom according to the record "Israël was

ning of a great, prosperous, and as yet unblemished career, that his prophecies were composed. All was well with the two kindred nations; over them, no doubt, as overall the other little powers in Palestine the shadow of the great Assyrian empire was beginning to rise—but for the moment Jeroboam had got the upper hand of Syria, which up to this time had been the strongest of Israel's enemies, and held Damascus captive. Nothing but well-being and prosperity seems to have existed, nothing but auguries of good fortune to come would seem natural in the circumstances. On the other hand in Judah King Uzziah was no idolater, but, till the presumptuous idea of himself burning incense in the Temple,

every one is agreed. Was it, perhaps, a young Hezekiah, a young Josiah of whom they fondly hoped in the first place that he might be the deliverer? but if so—and in the dim yet splendid vision that rose before them, the lines were all indefinite, and who could refuse to hope that any noble and gracious youth might unfold into that promised prince?—there is no insistence upon it, no affirmation, nor even anything that could be interpreted into an assurance that this was he. They had every inducement that men could have to make their prophecy agree with the prognostics of a new reign: but they never did so—nor did all the prosperities and splendours of the present ever draw them from their

cries the disturbed and angry priest, “flee thou away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there : but prophesy not again any more at Bethel, for it is the king’s chapel, and it is the king’s court” (or the sanctuary and the house of the kingdom, according to the marginal correction of the authorised version). “I was no prophet,” answers Amos, “neither was I a prophet’s son. I was a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamore fruit : and the Lord took me as I followed the flocks, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel.” The same message with individual modifications is conveyed by all the prophets of the day. In Micah there seems a hope, his message being addresse<sup>r</sup>,

arisen in the days of the first monarch to make Palestine tremble; yet even in Judah was the trumpet of coming disaster sounded, "The cities shall be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and

fully carried on—yet still the same cry. The prophets unfold to us the state of morals and manners which existed in both the fated kingdoms with a sternness of censure which, no doubt, to their contemporaries, seemed exaggerated, such a trenchant “criticism of life” as even

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Among these humble hosts without authority, whose  
musings are incomplete and their conclusions framed

incomprehensible, yet is always more or less understood by the heart, lays the case very plainly before every one of His creatures. To the lowest intelligence, as to the highest, there is a standard, a line which divides between good and evil. There are a hundred arguments on either side, and the case has been gone over and over again since the beginning of the world in every generation under all circumstances. And many a breaking heart has cried and implored in every age for the one thing that cannot be granted, that God would force child or friend or husband or wife into that right way, would annihilate the perverse will, and destroy the disobedient instincts, and make men good who have no desire to be good. It seems to me that this is the everlasting No of which the philosopher writes. God who has such pity as a father hath, supplies every argument, every inducement that can affect a thinking and loving being; but He will not take away that power of choice which is the man's distinction in the universe, nor force the soul to obey Him. The mortal father follows humbly, without knowing it, in pain and sorrow, this same sole practice. With man it is dictated indeed by the force of things, by the impossibility of compelling another mind into any way which it does not itself choose; but with God I venture to believe it is the great secret which explains all that is inexplicable. The way is clear, be it to the savage, be it to the sage;—the infinite Pity watches over all and in many a silent moment enforces unseen the open lesson—but leaves in this world the inalienable liberty which men have as never to be exchanged, let us hope, in another sphere, for that soft irresistible constraining which the love of Christ exercises on us to draw us to the truth and to the life.

thought. But as it is impossible to avoid forming individual theories upon matters which concern us all so deeply, I hope the reader will pardon the momentary departure from our immediate subject. On these lines, at least, the great parable of the Jewish history was carried out. Their mission was set very clearly before them, the highest honour conceivable for a nation: their law, so stern in rectitude, yet accompanied with such wonderful shadings of charity and kindness, was given to them centuries before any such code is known in any other race (and this on the showing of the most determined critics, who impute a system of wholesale imposition to the leaders of the tribes yet cannot den-





him. “If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down: for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?” The Shylock of modern history has put this charge far out of his ken, and so had the Hebrew of the days of the last Jeroboam. They lay down upon clothes laid to pledge—what we call now the Arab cloak, which is his house, his cover from the scorching sun, his bed and blanket in which he still lies down secure under any tent or tree wherever it may chance to him to pass the night. The poor man, unable to bring his penny of redemption, must have shivered in the night air in his light tunic while the traditional Jew, the impersonation of the usurer, stretched himself in the most primitive form of warehousing, on the coverings of his debtors—the cruellest form of pawnbroking. The next item in the indictment follows closely upon this. “They sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes.” What but bondage and slavery remained for the unfortunate from whom his all was thus taken? Bondage, too, was permitted in such a case, that a man should work out his debt, but not that he should be sold by his countrymen, his kinsmen. Thus one of the greatest offences of the race, an organised and systematic breach of the law, is denounced by Amos. The Hebrew instinct had been foreseen and guarded against in that law with its special and strict enactments; but here it appears in full and flagrant operation, open to the eye of day.

Such an example has a more picturesque and convincing effect than the more general condemnations of oppression.

in the midst both of idolatry and law-breaking, that the

which that craving for money to supply their luxuries which is so constant a feature of a falling state, leads to every kind of injustice and oppression: where the cause of the weak is unsafe, peculation in every public office, the very hand of the judge not clean: where ostentation and luxury prevail, the women's special prodigality of dress calling forth an indignant protest as in all other primitive indictments, the men's indolent effeminacy, their vacant lives, and pursuit of pleasure reckless and boundless, filling in the details of the picture. Cruelty and oppression appear on all sides, exactions of all kinds, extravagance and self-indulgence, the prophets prophesying falsely and the people loving to have it so: the courts of law debased, the lender turned into a usurer, the debtor threatened with slavery, a society altogether disorganised, without effective authority, without rule, pervaded by license and a slackening of all



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ury, waited at the gate, to take them across the valley in a party of mingled pleasure and devotion, and up the slope of Olivet to some favourite grove, where half clandestine, half recognised, the gayer rites of another worship were performed. Nothing like being on the safe side, one can imagine the cynic nobles saying, as they came back to envelop themselves in their silken robes, and lay themselves upon their sculptured couches with all the fine work of ivory and gilding:—while steward and intendant outside ground every farthing that could be got out of the misery of the needy, out of the prodigal's greedy want and the shivering poor man who

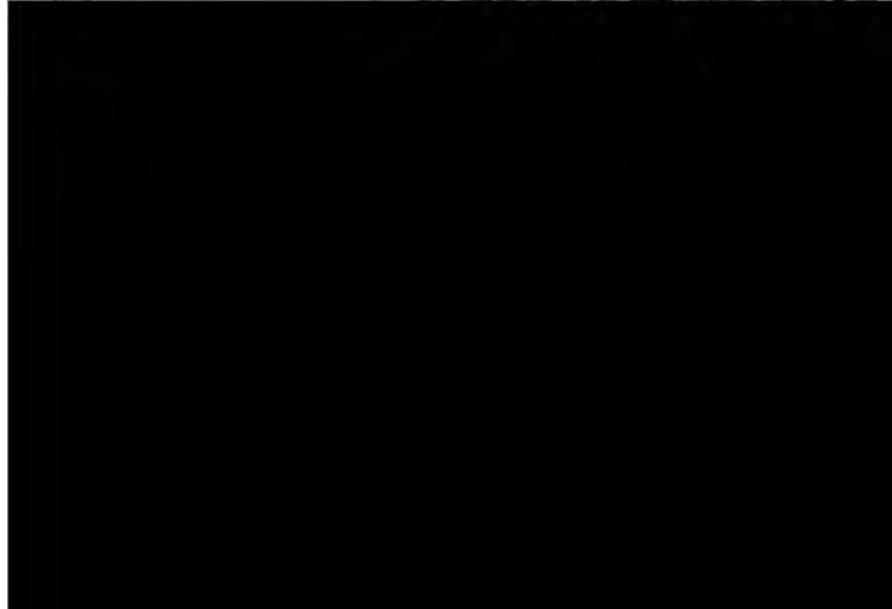
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and he had beheld the restoration, the re-dedication, a

than is the triumphant vision of a time to come in which





human example it was not. The awe, the solemn impression, the extraordinary relief in a moment to all the terrors of the threatened city died with the day that brought them forth, and the human routine went on as before. So it has been in every age: and so it will be, no doubt, till the race comes to an end, or some other impulse higher than any known heretofore gives a higher possibility, an alteration beyond all hopes . . . .

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before his race: with great indecency, M. Renan and other critics say, but that is scarcely the question. It is an incident that might occur even now, though probably not with the same universal publicity, in the same unchanged and unchangeable land.

And was it, perhaps, at the same early period that he stood—in one of those characteristic openings of the steep dark street where the crowd that gathered to listen would establish itself as in a theatre in the narrow depth of that ravine of building, each line of glowing turban or kerchief threaded with gold, rising a little higher than the other; and with the viol in his hand which was capable of serious as well as frivolous use *sans* in the

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“ What could have been done more to my vineyard,  
That I have not done in it?  
Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes,  
Brought it forth wild grapes ?

“ And now go to ;  
I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard :  
I will take away the hedge thereof,  
And it shall be eaten up ;  
And break down the wall thereof,  
And it shall be trodden down :  
And I will lay it waste :  
It shall not be pruned, nor digged ;  
But there shall come up briars and thorns :  
I will also command the clouds  
That they rain no rain upon it.”

Then, one can fancy the louder note struck from the rument, the pause of the singer, the stir in the multi-





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" Howbeit he meaneth not so,  
Neither does his heart think so.

" For he saith,  
By the strength of my hand I have done it,  
And by my wisdom ; for I am prudent :  
I have removed the bounds of the people,  
I have put down the inhabitants  
Like a valiant man. . . .

" Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith ?  
Shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it ?  
As if the rod should shake them that lift it up,  
Or the staff against that (the hand) which is not wood."

We can only pause here to note how the prophet bursts  
forth in the midst of the hollow words of men.

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“ He is come to Aiath,  
He is passed to Migron ;  
At Michmash he hath laid up his carriages :  
They are gone over the passage :  
They have taken up their lodging at Geba ;  
Ramah is afraid ;  
Gibeah of Saul is fled.  
Cry shrill with thy voice, O daughter of Gallim :  
Listen, O Laish ! thou poor Anathoth.  
Madmenah is scattered ;  
The inhabitants of Gebim gather to flee.

“ This very day he will halt at Nob :  
He will shake his hand  
Against the mount of the daughter of Zion,  
Against the hill of Jerusalem.”

shall not regard silver," rise up pitiless before our eyes: and still more wonderful is the vision in which the prophet, suddenly rapt as is his characteristic from the more practical and immediate scope of his poem, and plunged with an overwhelming force of impulse into the future and the unseen, tears aside the dark veil of Hades and displays the great dead, the monarchs of the past, rising to meet the fallen conqueror—

" Hell from beneath is moved for thee  
To meet thee at thy coming:  
It stirreth up the dead for thee,  
Even all the chief ones of the earth :  
It hath raised up from their thrones

deliverance—Isaiah's great ode which had been listened to in its first utterance with troubled and wondering incomprehension, may have been taken out from among the other rolls of mystic writing and read with an understanding and awed acknowledgment, of its tremendous truth. Sennacherib's fall was not the final meaning of that prophecy, yet it might well have seemed so, a presage and preface. Hezekiah no doubt had heard it proclaimed, when he was a boy, in his father's troubled and disastrous reign, when, perhaps, the utmost that was thought of it was that it was an imaginative speculation, a vision of what might be if ever that great and conquering power should fall. In the same way, I believe, it was applied to Napoleon in the time of his glory. And it can scarcely be believed that there were not men in Judah who were capable of feeling the force of the poetry and upon whose memory that picture of Hades had imprinted itself with the vividness of youthful recollection. When the first wonder, the first stunned and startled sensation, the rapture of exultation in their deliverance were somewhat abated, would not they bethink themselves—was there not something we have heard, a poem beginning “Hades is moved” a vision that made the heart beat? Surely it was of the Assyrian the prophet spoke? Isaiah in these latter days was no longer, perhaps, the minstrel prophet who had declaimed his warnings and his promises in the public places, who had walked barefoot as a sign and symbol, whose child had been the measure of predicted time. He was the counsellor of the king, the man to whom even the politicians made their resort when their difficulties were overwhelming, the great and acknowledged instructor as well as the most wonderful poet that was known in Jerusalem. Did some gay depu-

those great dreams of the Deliverer to come, on which all his being was intent, bidding him come and read to the king that old thing of his, which the old men were talking of, that vision, or whatever it might be, of Hades ? Let him arise and bring it forth and read to the king. And with what awe would Hezekiah listen, in his timid faithfulness, for whom Hades would never be disturbed, whose hope was for peace in his own day whatever might follow, and perhaps a humble slipping into heaven at the end, no king, but the least of God's servants. No exultation, no cry of triumph was in that poem, but the awe of a great judgment and a great suffering, a vast and dim

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met his cry of "Woe to Babylon" nor the doom which he

to come, breaks forth anon into cries of joy that thrill the air. Or if the reader pleases it is now the new Isaiah, the poet of the restoration who speaks.

"Awake, awake ;  
Put on thy strength, O Zion ;  
Put on thy beautiful garments,  
O Jerusalem, the holy city !  
Shake thyself from the dust ;  
Arise, O Jerusalem :  
Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck,  
O captive daughter of Zion.

"How beautiful upon the mountains  
Are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings,  
That publisheth peace ;  
That bringeth good tidings,  
That publisheth salvation ;  
That saith unto Zion,  
Thy God reigneth !

"Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice ;  
With the voice together shall they sing :  
For they shall see eye to eye,  
When the Lord shall bring again Zion.

"Break forth into joy,  
Sing together,  
Ye waste places of Jerusalem :  
For the Lord hath comforted his people,  
He hath redeemed Jerusalem.

"The Lord hath made bare His holy arm  
In the eyes of all the nations ;  
And all the ends of the earth  
Shall see the salvation of our God."

By whom was this glory to come, this joy so far transcending everything that eye has seen or ear heard or the heart of man conceived—not the salvation of Judah alone but of all the ends of the earth, crowding round her as the holy city? It is by the King that shall reign in righteousness, the new branch which shall spring out

manner of being is this Holy One of Israel? This is what Isaiah asks, in vision, in high and wonderful poetic musings, "searching," as St. Peter explained long after, "**what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in him did signify.**" What did it signify? Something too strange for belief, too wonderful for the most authentic vision. Was he but dimly conscious what it meant? did he believe it allegorical, a similitude, a spiritual picture, not a fact to be verified in every detail? or did he cry out like Peter and the rest, "Be it far from thee, Lord!" in the first anguish and comprehension of what they meant, those wonderful words?

“ And he made his grave with the wicked,  
And with a rich man in his death ;  
Because he had done no violence,  
Neither was any deceit found in his mouth.

“ Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him ;  
He hath put him to grief :  
When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,  
He shall see his seed,  
He shall prolong his days,  
And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.”

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## CHAPTER II.

Jerusalem, and this time with a force which exceeded all previous threatenings in the unbroken terror of its denunciations, as the events about to take place exceeded all others in their misery.



the ancient tabernacle, the young Samuel who answered, "Here I am" in the same simple faith to his master on earth and his Master in heaven. Jeremiah, from his youth, must have had a melancholy and troubled spirit, feeling to the depths of his heart the uneasy condition of all about him, the seething of all the disorderly elements, the decomposition of the national life. He shrank in his timidity and sadness from the terrible task put upon him. He had not the splendid and fiery eloquence of Isaiah, the impetus of genius and energy which carried that prophet, swift and triumphant, to the heights and depths of his subject whatever that might be. And the rapid dramatic succession of terror and

iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, and the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee ; but they shall not prevail against thee ; for I am with thee, saith the Lord thy God."

*cleft of the wall under the Temple wall he could see*



of pious frauds by which they conceive the religion of



sumes with stern and simple details which bring before

claim without ceasing. It was not with his own will that he did it. Again and again does he mourn his cruel fate, cursing the hour that he was born, upbraiding God himself for having put this yoke upon his shoulders, with that wild audacity of suffering which breaks forth so often in the weak. "O Lord, thou hast deceived me, and I was enticed," *i.e.* to deliver this painful unwilling message, he cries: "thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed. I said I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay." Thus, notwithstanding all dark looks, all threats directed against him, and no doubt the restraints which his respectable kindred both in Jerusalem and Anathoth would attempt to enforce, nothing stayed the melancholy messenger, who was there in all the assemblies of the people, a shadow upon every brief rejoicing, an unyielding monitor monotonous in the continued warning, which his melancholy countenance uttered even when his voice was silent. Sometimes he calls upon the pastoral people coming up to the markets with their produce to abandon their tents and villages and collect in the defenced cities; sometimes he describes the progress of that fierce nation from the north coming up from Dan with a snorting of horses, till the whole land trembles; sometimes imitates the wild and confused cries of those upon whom this sudden destruction falls; sometimes describes in words of fire the desolate country without inhabitants, the land lying waste, the silent evacuated houses, the fields in which there is no voice of cattle;

voice which had become so familiar, Jeremiah pours forth his lament with that individual voice, with that strong cry of personal anguish, which is the most convincing of all.

“ Oh that my head were waters,  
And mine eyes a fountain of tears,  
That I might weep day and night  
For the slain of the daughter of my people !

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prophet might be standing? The wonder is not that he was seized and punished at last, but that his freedom from insult and injury lasted so long.

solution: the young sons whom he had left behind to meet the emergency were wholly unfit to face its difficulties, and probably the wisest and bravest of his counsellors and champions perished with him at Megiddo, leaving Judah as Scotland was after Flodden, defenceless, at the mercy of the conqueror. The son who succeeded him, Jehoahaz, not the eldest in age but probably the child of a mother of superior rank, had a precarious reign of three months during which time Pharaoh Necho became master of the kingdom and city, exacted an enormous indemnity, and dethroned and carried off the



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youth (old enough, however, at twenty-three to have made a stand for his country had it been in him), raising an elder brother under the name of Jehoiakim to the insignificant throne. This period of trouble and misery has little place in the record: no doubt the city was but a scene of disorder, fugitives coming and going, the unhappy remnants of the army who had fled from Megiddo; and conflicting, miserable discussions going on, whether to attempt any resistance to the invader or to leave him to enter at his will—which is evidently what was done in the want of any fit head or trustworthy defence. But



certainly the pride even of those who defiled it, a national distinction and glory: "If ye will not hearken . . . I will make this house like Shiloh, I will make this city a curse among all the nations of the earth." The crowd had no difficulty in understanding his words. It was from Shiloh that the Ark had been carried forth to procure, like a fetish, the triumph of the Israelites, who had come to look upon it as the heathens looked upon their gods of wood and stone: it had been disastrously lost in the lost battle: and Shiloh had become Ichabod, a place from whence the glory had departed. This prophecy, so appalling, so definite, so clearly comprehensible, produced an immediate tumult in the crowd: they were no longer under the sway of the pious King who protected the prophets; they were no longer afraid to raise their voices or their heads in the presence of their victors. Masters for the moment of their own city, free to do what they would, with many an unsettled score of resentment against this prophet of evil, the first outcry of the angry priests against him lit up the excitement of the people into fury. How dared he to say that this house should be as Shiloh? The priests seized upon the audacious speaker, the angry crowd clustered round him. "Death" was the universal cry, the fierce impulse of the uncontrollable multitude, their first word as soon as they had the power, as when hundreds of years later they cried "Crucify him." The noise of the sudden tumult reached the "princes," the secular authorities of the country, as they came up from the king's house, perhaps from a palace on the site of Solomon's palace within the enclosure of the Temple, perhaps from the city of David where his ancient house had been: most probably the former, where they would be near at hand and no tumult could escape their notice. They went and took their seats in

gate, perhaps that now called the Golden Gate (so carefully built up to prevent the entrance of Messiah, when

he had been sunning himself on the steps of the Temple, to tell that tale, as a thing he could himself recollect ? At all events Jeremiah's protectors were more powerful than those who were against him and for the time he

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Jeremiah must have come from the Temple, probably by that new gate where he had just been tried for life, and down the slopes of Moriah to where pleasure Kedron ran in the bottom of the valley, and followed its stream to the southern end where Absalom's tower rises up to point the way. No doubt there were devout followers who would not miss a movement of the prophet who would point to each other the way he had taken an go after him; and no doubt also angry enemies eager to catch him in his talk, and devoted in hate as the others in love to every trace of his footsteps. There could be no more pleasant walk about Jerusalem than that path by the purling of the little river under the olive-trees on Moriah.

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thereafter with the price of blood frowned upon them

rant, but who could not mistake the simplicity and force of that sign. The high priest, perhaps, was absent, perhaps unwilling to interfere with the son of his prede-

from the valley, in hot indignation, but made no movement until the prophet paused again "in the court of the Lord's house" and began to repeat his prophecy. "Behold, I will bring on this city all the evil that I have pronounced against it." Then the priest could contain himself no longer. He gave the order to seize and punish the prophet of woe. "Then Pashur smote Jeremiah." This would apparently indicate that, transported by a passion of resentment to hear himself and all the ruling party thus defied, he inflicted not only the shame of the stocks but the punishment of the lowest offender, the forty stripes save one, upon his fellow-priest, his kins-

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as a mighty terrible one": a thought which in the midst of his trouble, in the darkness of his abandonment all shamed and suffering as he is, makes him break forth into a sudden burst of joy, "Sing ye to the Lord, praise ye the Lord: for he hath delivered the soul of the poor from the hands of evildoers." Did the watchman on the walls hear this sudden cry in the night and come down to listen—overawed by the victim's triumph, and, perhaps, not knowing that when that momentary shout had died on the night air, the heart of the lonely man sank again in his bosom, and in a despondency as sudden and instinctive he cursed the day that he was born?

years under the protection of King Josiah, and the prestige of his own father's name, it is very possible that the ignominy of his present position was more than he could bear. His ministry had in some measure changed even before this turning-point. From the beginning of the reign of Jehoiakim he had been a man discomfited, to whom other methods than those of argument and exhortation were necessary. He had been forced to adopt the symbolical teaching which had been common to Isaiah and the other prophets, the language of signs and pictures, and that of a most forcible kind. He had put a yoke upon his own neck and bonds on his limbs as a symbol of the subjection which was to come not only upon Judah but upon all the surrounding nations. He had brought up the Rechabites out of their dwelling and offered them wine in order to show by the contrast of their faithfulness to their ancestor's command how unreasonable was the disobedience of the Hebrews. And last and most telling of all, he had broken the potter's vessel, the bottle of brittle earthenware, to show how the kingdom of David was to be dashed to pieces on the very stones which formed its foundations. Was not this of itself an evidence that his audience had ceased to be the instructed and superior classes, and had come to consist more and more of the mere multitude who would not have understood his addresses, but who comprehended as by a flash of lightning the primitive language of sign and parable? And was not he himself at the gate, standing fixed in that disgraceful pillory, a sign above all others, a testimony that Israel would not hear, nor God's people consider, that the time of teaching, of warning, of reformation was past, and that nothing now but the fulfilment of all his terrible prophecies remained.

Yet one effort more, however, had to be made. Proba-

had heard but little of what Jeremiah had to say. It is true that the prophet had been commanded on more than one occasion to stand at the gate by which the king went out and came in, probably where he still sat to administer justice on set occasions according to primitive custom. But of all persons in the world a king can escape most easily from what he does not wish to hear, and either the prophet might be hustled away or the king break up the session to escape from that persecuting voice. Thus there was yet one individual in Jerusalem to whom it might be supposed that the warning and appeal to repentance, and the promise that was invariably attached to a *change of life had not fully come*. Jeremiah was there-

some humble house at Anathoth or other shelter, we are not told; but at all events, while it was going on the prophet and his devoted secretary must have had an

But no party, we may well believe, advocated as Jeremiah did, the policy of throwing aside all unavailing resistance, and rendering full submission to the invader.

It was not a patriotic policy at the first glance. But we may believe, at the same time, from the evidence, at once in these same prophetic addresses, and in the national records which point to a state of utter disorganisation and incompetence, that Jerusalem was quite unfit to offer any serious resistance, and that any feeble and hopeless, if still fierce and desperate, stand she could make would

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train of captives following his steps, and among them the royal boys, descendants of good King Hezekiah to

this may have been, Baruch was sent for, and when he had read his book (which probably contained but a chosen few of the prophecies of Jeremiah) to this grave assembly, their conclusion was that the king must be informed. "Tell us now, how didst thou write all these words?" they asked. Then Baruch answered them: "He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in this book." The grave men, concerned and troubled as by a serious matter heard for the first time, appear to us like a picture surrounding the young scribe with anxious looks, disturbed beyond measure by what they had heard, not knowing how the king might take it. Was it possi-

"his winter-house," no doubt the southern rooms fully exposed to the sunshine, looking over the fortifications of the Temple enclosure to the network of ascending



with the purer fire of wood embers glowing red. The king sat near this centre of warmth while the courtier stood up and read. There would be some such stand as those now used for the Koran to support the heavy roll. But Jehudi had not read above "three or four leaves" when the king snatched it from him, and drawing a knife from his girdle, divided the parchment with a stroke and threw the pieces upon the fire, "until all the roll was consumed." Three of the princes, Elmathan (who would seem to have been the king's father-in-law) and Delaiah and Gemariah attempted by their entreaties to restrain him, but without effect: the other courtiers would seem to have been released from their terrors by the king's

had destroyed was done over again. It was a serious matter in those days to destroy a book of which only one copy existed: but even then it was a futile effort. The prophet repeated in the enforced leisure of his banishment all that he had before dictated to his secretary, "and there were added besides many like words." Then, as now, it was the most vain attempt that could be made to crush the literature by which, and more than even than now, a nation lives. For what should we have known of *Jerusalem* any more than we know of *Edom*, or *Ammon*, or *Moab*, but for *Jeremiah* and his friend? A painfully deciphered stone, the triumphant record of one man's doings, calls forth the wonder and curiosity of the whole world, while the living record of how men looked and talked and acted in all the recognisableness of their humanity, is our legacy from the Hebrews: over which naturally, it being so infinitely more important, we make no such commotion, receiving it calmly: or suggesting that it is, perhaps, all an invention, and that no such angry king, no such anxious coun-

the actual manner of his death. He was "bound in

feel as they themselves would have done the desolation of

the court who stood round Jehoiakim, with troubled

his palace to the prophet to ask his prayers and his advice. "Pray now unto the Lord our God for us." Was it superstition rather than devotion that inspired this embassy, as Balak had sent to Balaam to curse the Israelites? Did those unfortunate rulers of the doomed and impoverished place hope that if Jeremiah could but be got to change his mind all would go well? Was it rather as a fetish than as an exponent of God's will that they sought him? If so they were most quickly undeceived. The prophet after his wanderings, after the horrors of the siege and the captivity, the fulfilment of so many of his predictions, was not likely to be persuaded into other views by any embassy. His message even was scarcely tempered by the offer of a place of repentance. "Deceive not yourselves," he says, "saying the Chaldeans shall surely depart from us: for they shall not depart." It must have been with anger and disappointment that the baffled envoys withdrew.

And certainly Jeremiah's behaviour was not conciliatory. He would seem to have gone about, with the girdle round him which had been "marred" in the rocks by the Euphrates, and with that yoke on his neck which he had made as a symbol of the yoke of Babylon, and which was the occasion of a curious scene in the Temple when a certain Hananiah of Gibeon, one of the sons or school of the prophets, seized and broke the yoke with a false prediction that the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar would thus be broken in two years. The parable of the two baskets of figs has been already referred to. And when the messengers of Zedekiah were sent to Babylon with the tribute money Jeremiah charged them (one being his friend Gemariah) with a letter to the captives in which he exhorted them to entertain no hopes of speedy deliver-

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tarily alarmed by the rumour of Pharaoh's army approaching, had made a feint of raising the siege. As soon as the ways were liberated and the gates open Jeremiah went out "to go into the land of Benjamin" "in the midst of the people," no doubt among the crowd which would pour forth in search of food and refreshment after long famishing in the blockaded city. But the captain of the ward saw among the crowd the figure of the prophet, going in all probability to his father's fields at Anathoth to bring in provisions for himself and his kindred. "*Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans,*" he cried, seizing upon Jeremiah as he passed: and, no doubt, the crowd would think the accusation a very likely one considering how the prophet proclaimed the might of the Chaldeans and discouraged all resistance to them on every occasion. Jeremiah denied the accusation, but in vain: and he was hustled away through the throng to the Temple enclosure, and thence to the house of Jonathan the scribe, underneath which lay the dungeons hewn in the rock, and in such evil condition as the ancients thought fit and meet for serious offenders. Here, we are told, he remained "many days," which means in Hebrew idiom a long time, long enough we may suppose to admit of the return of the Chaldeans and to quench the noisy triumph of the Egyptian party in the city. Against this dominant faction Zedekiah, it is evident, could not maintain his own authority: but in the subsequent depression he took heart to have the prisoner brought out and conveyed secretly to his palace.

There is much that is touching and attractive in the character of Zedekiah as here exhibited. He was not a man of resolution or courage. He was not strong enough even to be sure of his own opinions or faith, but wavered according to the decisions of the moment; yet he had a



the end of the seventh year all the conditions of bondage

No sterner denunciation ever came from Jeremiah's lips than that which followed the miserable failure of this only real effort after amendment made in the doomed city. It was probably uttered in the miserable dungeon where he lay, scarcely capable of hearing, deep underground as he was, even those "snortings from Dan," when they come, that sound of a great multitude which would intimate to the whole city that the besiegers were gathering again to their camp outside the walls. "I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to famine; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the world." It

sent back to his dungeon. "Cause me not to return to the house of Jonathan, the scribe, lest I die there," and imprisoned him instead "in the court of the prison," presumably a bearable confinement which kept him out of the way of danger. Zedekiah gave orders at the same time that a piece of bread should be given him daily out of the bakers' street "until all the bread in the city was

of vainly endeavouring to hold at bay, the powerful monarch at their gates; but at the same time it was, no

the gate of Benjamin," the gate that looked out towards the north, that of St. Stephen or of Damascus, perhaps, in modern nomenclature, sadly sitting looking out upon the great army that lay stretched as far as eye could see, superintending, perhaps, the erection of some new machine for stones or other missiles on the walls. "My lord," said the eunuch, "these men have done evil in all that they have done to Jeremiah, the prophet whom they have cast into the dungeon; he is like to die of hunger in the place where he is: for there is no bread in the city." Strengthened by the king's permission Ebed-melech hurried away and with thirty men to aid him succeeded in drawing up Jeremiah with the aid of strong ropes and "old east clouts" (but this phraseology is far too Saxon for the Eastern rags and fragments, indescribable scraps of apparel)—put under his armholes to keep the cords from cutting into his emaciated frame—from the horrible pit and out of the miry

into the hands of the Chaldeans, and they shall burn <sup>it</sup> with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand." That this was now wise and patriotic advice there is no doubt; for resistance was hopeless, and only the rage of despair carried it on. And Zedekiah was, in fact, a revolted tributary who had accepted the kingdom under conditions which he had broken, and whose part it evidently was to make submission, since no higher rôle

plished. “He was there when Jerusalem was taken” looking on with a breaking heart while the last horrors were inflicted, the streets filled with the slain, the holy and beautiful house he loved battered down, and fire raging among its courts. No man harmed Jeremiah in that hour of fate: the Babylonian general would have given him honour and promotion if he would have accepted them, knowing, no doubt, by report that the prophet had always been on his side. It would appear that when all was over, he was bound with the rest in chains and went along with the mournful procession of captives as far as Rainah: where some one probably told the general who he was, and he was immediately released. “If it seem good to thee to come with me unto Babylon, come, and I will look well unto thee; but if it seem ill unto thee to come with me to Babylon, forbear: behold all the land is before thee: whither it seemeth

beautiful city, the joy of the whole earth, as they had proudly called her in their songs, lying bare upon her hillside, her dead unburied, the wretched relics of her populace coming out by night like owls and bats, gathering what garbage they could find to eat, afraid of their own shadows. Not any dread satisfaction in the prophecy fulfilled, not any sense of relief in the catastrophe accomplished would reconcile the hearts of these miserable Hebrews to the dreadful sight before their

eyes.

tradition calls the Grotto of Jeremiah, and in which it is believed the prophet took shelter, and wrote the great and heartrending poem which we call the Book of Lamentations. Nowhere could the desolation of the deserted city be more clearly seen. It was there that the assault had been made, and the shattered walls and ruined fortifications would afford clear views of the horror within, the vultures descending in dreadful clouds, the jackals stealing forth by night to seek an awful prey. The smoke of the burning would hang over the whole: and over Moriah the aching void where once Solomon's beautiful Temple had been, would wound the eyes that gazed and gazed and found no familiar outline in the charred ruins heaped upon the hill. And sound there would be none in the abandoned place, the openings of the streets all hushed, their steep lines of descent between buildings roofless, windowless, full of emptiness, pathetically visible without a passenger. And there the prophet of woe might well have looked forth under the black shelf of the rocks, and framed his mournful song —one of those wonderful Hebrew poems which fore-stalled in the early centuries all that later poets could

The reader will remember how Dante in the sudden hush and stupefaction of the blow which seemed to darken heaven and earth to him, could find no words so meet to express his sense of that cessation of life and hope as those of his ancient fellow craftsman, the poet of desolation, exiled, imprisoned, outlawed like him, yet turning ever like him with a heartbroken tenderness to the home of his love. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!" Jeremiah's prophecies had not possessed like those of his predecessor Isaiah the unfailing charm of a poetic genius which never flagged, and had all the resources of unconscious but supreme

*out of its dissipation. The final sentence of the chapter.*

" Mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water,  
Because the comforter is far from me.

" The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground,  
And keep silence:  
They have cast dust upon their heads;  
They have girded themselves with sackcloth:  
The virgins of Jerusalem  
Hang down their heads to the ground.

" The children and the sucklings swoon  
In the streets of the city.  
They say to their mothers,  
Where is the corn and the wine?  
They swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city.  
Their soul was poured out  
Into their mothers' bosom.

" Arise, cry out in the night:  
In the beginning of the watches pour forth thy heart like water  
Before the face of the Lord:  
Lift up thy hands towards Him for the life of thy young children,  
That they may be saved."

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[CHAP.

guardians who defended and adopted their action, is very curious; rest or hope was not for God's messenger either in Jerusalem or among the fugitives.

They and the children of Judah together, going and weeping :  
They shall go, and seek the Lord their God.  
They shall ask their way to Zion with their faces thitherward,  
    saying,  
Come, and let us join ourselves unto the Lord  
In a perpetual covenant  
That shall not be forgotten."

Thus the sun bursts once more from the clouds, and sheds a glow of light ineffable upon the conclusion of that troubled and darksome way. It is believed that he died in Egypt in a depth of national distress more dark and hopeless than that in Babylon: for the exiles in Egypt were in a voluntary captivity and to them no promise of restoration ever came.



### CHAPTER III.

presentation before the Hebrew audience of what must follow disobedience, the fullest picture of the forces opposed to them, which in their own strength they were incapable of meeting. The bold language of symbol when words failed, the picture-lesson adapted to the rudest mind, of Isaiah's child, of the piece of pottery in Jeremiah's hand—were all used for the same end. This was their burden, their ceaseless effort. And when God permitted these gifted souls, weighed down by the national destruction that was so clearly coming, and by the contradiction of sinners, and the hopelessness of averting that downward course, to escape into the blessed contemplation of a remote future, and the Deliverer who was to come—even then the highest rhapsody of prophetic vision was, as may be said, practical, no vague and radiant hope of a golden age, but a distinct portrayal of Him whom they looked for, a description in many points so exact that the wonder is how it could have been mistaken when the fulfilment came. And what is true of the chief among the prophets is true also of the minor members in different degrees of poetry and perception, all of whom had the same lesson to teach, the same burden of prophecy

III.]

THE PIANO

played out. He is off the scene, those proud stars -

"How shall we sing the Lord's song  
In a strange land?"

We have no parallel to this in all the world of literature, or to the impassioned cry which no Greek, no Roman patriotism has ever given utterance to with such heartrending force: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning!" It was among the exiles with whom this was the prevailing sentiment that Ezekiel, a young man at that recognised moment of fitness for office and privilege and the highest work, his thirtieth year, was suddenly called by the voice of the Lord, and consecrated by visions ineffable to the service of God and of his countrymen. He had been presumably brought to Babylon with the young king Jehoiachin five years before, to rejoin many captives of the previous reign already there: and probably also to find the remnant of an older captivity still, the relies of Israel, half identified at the end of a century with the people among whom they had been thrown, yet, no doubt, preserving many points of contact and much compassionate sympathy for the detachments of the Jews arriving one band after another in the same condition of dishonour and deprivation. Israel, however, had now been long lost amid the hordes of aliens, and had no national hope or centre to make a rallying point, except so far as, in the ponderings of years, the wise among them may have felt that in the one point of Jerusalem, and in the still undestroyed throne of David, there lingered yet a forlorn hope. That the minds of the captive community—from those high-placed and princely boys who served Nebuchadnezzar in his palace, to those who sat in the shade of the willows and had as yet recovered no energy or sense of a life still remaining to be lived out—were fixed with an intensity almost beyond record in all their afflictions to one

strained upon Jerusalem with something of the breathless and strained attention with which spectators watch a doomed ship in the midst of a tempest: her efforts to gain some sheltering harbour, the efforts made on her behalf, the sinking and rising of the broken hulk, with one poor flag of despair fluttering in the wild winds upon a spar, which from moment to moment may disappear in the blankness of the waves that rage about it—enchain-

*—their own thought*

even sing. It would almost seem to have been in some such forlorn colony that Ezekiel, the priest, the son of Buzi, was called to his office. Somewhere about the same time Jeremiah in Jerusalem had written a letter to the exiles—brought by the embassy sent from King Zedekiah with tribute or renewal of homage to the King of Babylon: in which he adjured them to disregard the false promises of deliverance made to them by unauthorised prophets, and to build houses and plant gardens and surround themselves with families: in short to enter upon all the routine of settled life in the country where their lot was now cast, and from which in the lifetime of the present generation there was likely to be no deliverance. Perhaps, at the period of Ezekiel's call, this exhortation had not yet reached Babylon in the long delays of the terrible road four months' journey across the desert. Perhaps, it never did reach the humble colony on the banks of the Chebar, apart from the greater current of life.

Their extreme absorption of thought and feeling in the fate of Jerusalem, is vividly apparent in the sort of object lesson which the prophet is told to give—whether in some part for the instruction of the people, whether to give him in his own person so vivid a sense of the inevitable calamity that every utterance would be thereby strengthened, it is impossible to say. He was "to portray the city, even Jerusalem" upon a tile, with all the details of the siege, the military mounds raised outside the walls (on the north side), the high tower which enabled the besiegers to discharge their missiles with effect, the battering rams, and all other instruments of war. No doubt the captives would gather round to watch while he drew on the soft unbaked clay, upon which the builders of Babylon scrawled all manner of names and symbols, tho-

camped against it. What a thing would that be to find in some Babylonian wreck or mass of ruins, the rude drawing on the brick or tile, the indications of gateway and rampart which every breathless watcher over his shoulder would recognise, as he formed them with unskilful hand! There on the tower of the northern gate would be King Uzziah's engines invented by cunning men "to shoot arrows and great stones withal," and there, opposite, the last refinement of war, Nebuchadnezzar's offensive works, confronting the other to still the defensive battery. Would the prophet, careless of personal comfort as are all the religious devotees of the East, prepare his polluted food be-

his house, "and the elders of Judah sat before me," waiting in melancholy silence for the expected message; when suddenly the prophet was rapt into that state in which the faculty of vision came to him—fell, as we should say, into a sort of trance—in which his spirit was suddenly transported to Jerusalem, "to the door of the inner gate that looketh towards the north, where was the seat of the image of jealousy," no doubt some image of Baal, or other idol such as many successive kings had not scrupled to bring into the house of the Lord. Ezekiel had been familiar with those courts and all they contained in his youth when, as a priest's son, he had been brought up in the precincts of the Temple. "The glory of the Lord was there"—that dazzling radiance of holiness and light which Ezekiel with faltering lips had endeavoured to describe to the astonished people: but it remained outside the walls: and with that glory in his eyes the prophet looked at the rigid features of the idol in its immovable helplessness with righteous contempt. But such a vacant monument of idolatry was little in comparison with what remained. In one of the many buildings which surrounded the Temple, and which were used as public offices, treasuries, and arsenals, and also for the dwellings of the priests as they served in their courses, he looked in and saw "the idols of the house of Israel" painted upon the wall: "every form of creeping things and abominable beasts," the golden calves, no doubt, the sacred cow of Egypt, the monkeys and snakes which have in their turn represented the framework of nature and its law to the debased imagination—the Ascidian, perhaps, of our own disguised idolatry and mocking worship. Seventy men of the elders of Israel—among them one whom he recognised,

crawling things. Yet was not this all. Outside in the gate the women, who seem in the distorted state of the race to have been, not as usual the most faithful to the worship of God, but foremost in every infidelity, sat weeping for Thamuz: and passing by them, in the very inner court at the entrance to the Temple itself—between the gate and the altar which stood close to the gate—the prophet saw five-and-twenty men, with their backs turned to the Temple and their faces towards the east, worshipping the sun, which shone over Olivet across the deep valley upon all the glistening pinnacles of the house of God. This was, we cannot but think, a more refined and ele-

patriotism, as in his brother prophet: but his view of

have had their will, they have turned from their allegiance and broken every vow; and now the inevitable end has come upon them, which overtakes all wantons, according to those very laws of nature which they preferred to  
*the law of God.*

In another picture the prophet shows us the King of Babylon standing "at the parting of the way, at the head of two ways," to try by divination whether the time had come to destroy Jerusalem. In his grasp were arrows, marked with the lot, which he shook in his hand according to an immemorial custom. And he also "consulted with images, he looked in the liver," trying the auguries of classic usage, which would thus seem to have been already existing from the remotest time. Then came the day, the dreadful day, when the decision was made. "Woe to the bloody city!" cries the prophet: "I the Lord have spoken. I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent: according to thy ways and according to thy doings shall He judge thee, saith the Lord God." With what terrible interest must the captives have listened, with what outeries of remonstrance and indignation, "Be it far from us!" with what trembling of heart! Their sons and their daughters, their fathers and mothers were left behind in the doomed city. If this were true what was there more in life to hope for? How were they to endure the dread suspense, the still more dreadful certainty of fate? the horror of knowing, the greater horror of not knowing, for long months of anguish before the swiftest foot could cross the great desert, the plains and mountains that lay between them and their home?

In the midst of their confusion and terror a sign of the most appalling description was given to the exiles. "Son of man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke." What was this mystic menace, this sorrow sent not for Ezekiel's sake, but

of the captives must have kept the prophet's house in

of, O Lord! or O my brother! no ashes on the head, no rites of sepulture—but only the silence of one universal horrible calamity too great for human signs or words.

After this tremendous sign and the predictions that accompanied it the prophet would seem to have been dumb, either metaphorically as saying no more upon this subject which occupied all thoughts, or actually. There is a long interval in his book (which by no means certainly, however, implies a direct chronological succession) during which a number of prophecies concerning other nations, comparatively dark to us who have no material by which to judge of their accuracy, are inserted: and it is not till nearly three years after, that the next incident which more nearly concerns us occurs. While he is sitting musing, perhaps writing down the message that has been given to him concerning Egypt, troubled all night with strange sensations, the premonitory symptoms of some great event and visitation, the messenger of fate accomplished suddenly appears before him. “One that had escaped out of Jerusalem came to me, saying, the city is smitten. Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb.” No doubt many public posts must have arrived in the meantime, and the news of the great victory must have been known in Babylon; but the captives by the Chebar were far out of the capital, and most likely nothing but a vague murmur had reached them, no detailed news, none of those overwhelming particulars which would make every family aware more or less what its own individual losses were, until the fellow townsman who had escaped—perhaps from the city itself in the

routes and places where his unaccustomed garb and faltering speech would be remarked, through the country ; and after long delay and many adventures, reached the little mournful colony who had hung their harps upon  
*the willows*.

who heard that day, perhaps of the extinction of their family, perhaps of the death of some gallant son on the walls of Jerusalem, or some daughter shamed and outraged in its bloody streets—would make no outcry, would repress every tear, bind their headgear upon their heads, and their shoes on their feet, with a pang still more profound in the renunciation of every sign of mourning, than we should feel in a similar self-denial. “Ye shall pine away and mourn one towards another.” What description could be more pathetic or more real? The father and mother would turn towards each other when they were alone, in the silent communion of sorrow, the woman clasp her child to her broken heart, the sisters lay their heads on each other’s shoulders, in grief that uttered no word: then confront the daylight with still faces and the dumbness of self-controlled despair, as Ezekiel had done in that dark day when the desire of his eyes had been taken from him.

And then it was that the prophet’s mouth was opened and he burst forth.

“As I live, saith the Lord God . . . Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. According to the seeking of a shepherd that seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

“And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel, by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places.

“I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be;

“Then shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fit pasture shall

tion, hoping for no comfort. "So thou art to them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument" had been the explanation of their attitude towards the prophet long before. Even now in their despair this was how they sought him, hoping, perhaps, for a moment's distraction, for something that would occupy their self-devouring thoughts. And this was what he proclaimed to them —no dirge, no wail of mourning, no outcry like that of Jeremiah: "Behold, and see if any sorrow is like unto my sorrow." Such a cry, no doubt, was what they expected, what would have most soothed their aching

increase it, and lay no famine upon you”—“the waste cities shall be filled with flocks of men.” Best of all, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; I will put my spirit within you, and cause ye to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” Strange message to follow the crowning disaster of a race, its destruction according to all precedent and every probability! Great Nineveh had fallen utterly, great Babylon was soon to fall. And no restoration came to these vast empires and thrones. But to little Jerusalem there was proclaimed another fate; and after thousands of years, after renewed and repeated destruction more complete, and a dispersion still more hopeless, the scattered descendants of the captives of Babylon, scattered in every corner of the earth—forming a part of every nation, yet never united to any—still hold that promise, and lift up their eyes towards the little land which could not hold a tithe of them, yet which mourns for them and waits for them till the end of time.

“I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

“And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them. I the Lord have spoken it.”

David’s house was ending in humiliation and woe, no prince of that race ever again to occupy the fallen throne, every branch of the royal line in captivity or extinguished altogether. But Ezekiel, though his mission was more sombre, and his methods less clear than that of his brother prophets, was yet not left without his share in

stands out for a moment clear amid all the terrible visions and smoke of destruction. "I will raise up for

*A prophet before you*"

" I prophesied as I was commanded : and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone.

" And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and skin covered them above : but there was no breath in them.

" Then said He unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say unto the wind, Thus saith the Lord God ;

" Come from the four winds, O breath,

" And breathe upon these slain that they may live.

" So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came unto them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army."

tion. The prophet himself did not live to see it. With him and with them as individuals, God had His own methods as He has now and always. But to Israel and Judah the only promise possible was that of renewed

the everlasting dominion over the heart of man, of the holy city, the scene of our Lord's life and death. But by the rivers of Babylon at that dread moment the human heart had had enough of tragedy. Isaiah himself could but vaguely foresee that wonderful picture which he made, "searching what and what manner of things the spirit that was in him did prophesy," strangely revealing in the midst of those mists of glory the countenance marred more than any man of which he has left so affecting a portrait. What they needed now was the assurance of restoration and blessing and joy.

Nor was that assurance vain even in fact. The return of the Jews from captivity nearly seventy years after, was such an event as is unparalleled in history. The strenuous devotion of men born in exile to that ever-longed-for, never-forgotten city, and the strange impression made on the minds of the conquerors, by what means we are left uninformed, which made that return possible, forms an occurrence unique in the world, bearing no analogy to any other ever known. Nothing could have seemed less possible, nothing ever was more true. It was wonder enough to fill the dark horizon of the captives with exultation; and it was once more the opportunity of the race to claim and merit every ancient promise of blessing; an opportunity not taken, as we know, but which to the prisoners in Babylon it would at that moment seem impossible that their progeny, taught by experience so awful, could reject.

And with this assurance the prophecies close. It was all literal to the poet and teacher whose every lesson had been pointed by sight and sound, who had scratched the ruined Jerusalem on his tragic tile, and who now drew his lines unchangeable in solid substance of stone and





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national history when all seemed over and the eclipse of their nation and city was to every mortal vision a catastrophe without hope, there must have been something in those measurements and details, the chambers for priests unborn, the great splendid courts and galleries for a worship extinguished and a people scattered to the ends of the earth—something in the mingled impossibility yet certainty, that dazzle of the contradictory which is in all human affairs but in none so much as in the history of the Jews—which uplifted the hearts of the captives as

additional interest to the always significant suggestion of an entrance thus hermetically closed: by which the Prince of Princes has gone in, by which it may be He came forth to His agony in the garden, and by which, in the wonders and mysteries of a future of which we know so little, He may yet return.

And here closes the first portion of the history of Jerusalem, the little city on the hillside, like so many others of the little cities which still cover the hills of Palestine. The small tough fortress that David took has grown into a beautiful and splendid metropolis under our eyes—not vast like Babylon, or Nineveh, those ancient centres of the world—but with a splendour of the heart, the cradle of music, of poetry and song; with palace and temple, not perhaps so beautiful as those of Greece that were yet to be, but pervaded by a meaning far more beautiful, the presence of a God one and supreme, the spirit of a law, unique in its tenderness as in its justice. We have seen this city rise and fall again with all the vicissitudes of human contrariety and changeableness and the caprices of a specially perverse and individual race. It has poured forth such paens of triumph and wailings of lamentation as never were uttered from earth to heaven: and now it has fallen, fallen from its high state—destroyed with a completeness that never overtook either Babylon or Nineveh, those cities now altogether wiped out from human habitation and ken—smoking in utter ruin, all that was capable in it gone, a few beggars and skilless poor left to creep about the deserted streets, and seek a pittiful maintenance among the foundations of the burnt granaries and the fruits of gardens trampled down. And yet over this desolate place the air thrills with promises of great-

lines that seem to cut the parchment, the walls and towers of another temple more great than Solomon's. Could it ever be that these promises should be fulfilled and that great sanctuary once more stand dazzling under the Eastern sun ?



## PART III.—THE RETURN AND RESTORATION.

The apocryphal writings, which, though without any

Mordecai or Mordocheus, the Jew, the foster-father of

1.] THE RETURN AND RESTORATION. 357

the beloved birthplace which would not contain one

life. Was it the aged Daniel from his retirement who came forth, with perhaps a roll of old parchment carried after him in its case, to show the monarch his own very name in the fading lines a century and a half old? "Cyrus, my shepherd," of whom God said "I guided thee though thou hast not known me." In the criticism of recent times the mere fact that Cyrus is named is evidence enough that the writer cannot have been Isaiah but another man, the contemporary of the great conqueror; but that would be an exceedingly poor argument if Daniel or some other influential Jew actually possessed the roll of Isaiah's prophecy in which these words appeared. It is, we believe, a tradition that this was the way in which the attention of Cyrus was secured,

**L.] THE RETURN AND RESTORATION. 359**

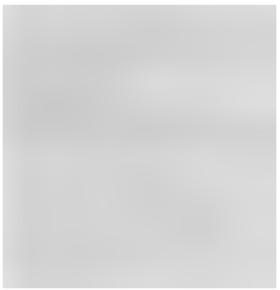
people had sown in tears, but would return joyful carry-

That some forty-two thousand of the captives (as stated by Ezra: the summing of the items does not come to this, but to somewhere about thirty thousand; it is very possible, however, that the children of the many families made up the larger number) had the courage to set out, and to take upon themselves the task of building up that great Temple which had occupied Solomon in its first construction for years, and so many other kings in constant reparation and restoration—is a proof of the great vitality and earnestness of the national life among them. The very old and the very young were in the vast party which moved slowly off from Babylon, and from all the villages and cities in which they dwelt, the entire community of their countrymen, no doubt, coming forth to see them start, watching with eyes, half wistful, half ashamed, the heroic remnant which was giving up everything for home. Many must have thus looked on who had not the courage to go with them, or who were so bound with the engagements of life, the cares of wealth, or those of poverty, as to be unable to join the train. Many, no doubt, had compounded for their want of energy by buying back captives from their masters, as is afterwards stated, and by undertaking the expenses of the journey for their poorer countrymen. The prince Zerubbabel and the high priest Jeshua have left little

*To face page 360.*

ANCIENT TEMPLE.





ims, servants of the Temple, and a larger number of musicians, "children of Asaph," besides the laymen rich and poor who formed the main body. "Two hundred singing men and women" are mentioned among the servants, in addition to these sacred singers of Asaph's race, of whom there were a hundred and twenty-eight—so that the great caravans must have had a sufficient choir of performers, for those songs with which they ~~inspired~~ <sup>inspired</sup> the way.

delays incident to such a crowd, and difficulties in the supply of food, besides the opposition of here and there an irate commune to their passage, the enmity which the very friendship of one town would raise in another, as well as the constant risk of sickness among the family groups, those swift epidemics of the East smiting down the travellers. And when they arrived on the northern heights from which they could first see Jerusalem, that point where the mailed warriors of the Middle Ages shouted and wept in the transport of their end attained, what cries, what wailings must have burst from the expectant crowd! That heap of ruins on the two hills, calm Olivet standing like a sentinel over them, the valley of the Tyropœon cutting like the jagged stroke of an axe between the upper and the lower city, the low lines of humble roofs hid among the heaps of destruction, what a sight to meet the eyes of the exiles! Was this the Mount Zion which was the joy of the whole earth, compactly built, beautiful for situation, the city

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offered them so sad a welcome, standing up roofless and  
~~desolate under the blinding sun~~

supported by piles as summer dwellings, would be much more wholesome, as well as pleasant, than any kind of encampment among the ruins, extensive enough to have lodged the people in strength. We remember to have been told that these summer tabernacles were not only for coolness but to escape the scorpions which swarmed among the ruins of older and greater buildings surrounding a little modern town of Palestine. The tabernacles of Jerusalem in that blazing autumn weather, perched high over the broken walls and heaps of indiscriminate ruin, would, no doubt, have this reason too.

From that time forth the smoke of the evening and the morning sacrifice began to rise again over Moriah, never to be wholly extinguished save for a brief interval, until the great sacrifice, of which these rites were but the shadow, had been accomplished there.

It was not, however, till the second year that Zerubbabel and Jeshua found themselves in a position to begin the rebuilding of the Temple. They had not only to clear the site, during the course of which they would, no doubt, find much valuable material in those stones in which, as sings a poet of the captivity, God's people found pleasure, and in the very dust which was dear, but to provide the finer material of the interior, the cedar which Solomon had procured from Tyre, and for which the new restorers of his Temple made a bargain similar to his, exchanging the crops, which must have been abundant since they became thus at once an article of barter, for the precious wood. What a stirring one more in those dry bones! Solomon's foundations, no doubt, still stood, fast in the rock, as some portion of them do now, Cyclopean blocks, marked with the sign of their Phoenician builders; and many of the great

the rebuilding; while all about the valleys of Hinnom must have been heard the shoutings and strainings of the workmen who had dragged the great logs across the plain of Sharon and by all the mountain ways towards the city. The Levites were appointed to the charge of the work, and as soon as the area was cleared and the masons, no doubt also supplied by Tyre, that home of industry, were ready to begin, a great solemnity was held once more upon Moriah. The people flocked again from their villages, the consecrated overseers were all in their places, the builders clustered about the great foundation stone. Something of the glory of old must

work, to which they were commissioned by the great God who had distinguished their race through all years of human history, and the great king magnanimous and powerful who was His servant though he knew it not. The past and the future crowded upon them as they sang and shouted in their corner of little Palestine. Was it not the greatest act taking place in the world, though that world, like Cyrus, knew it not?

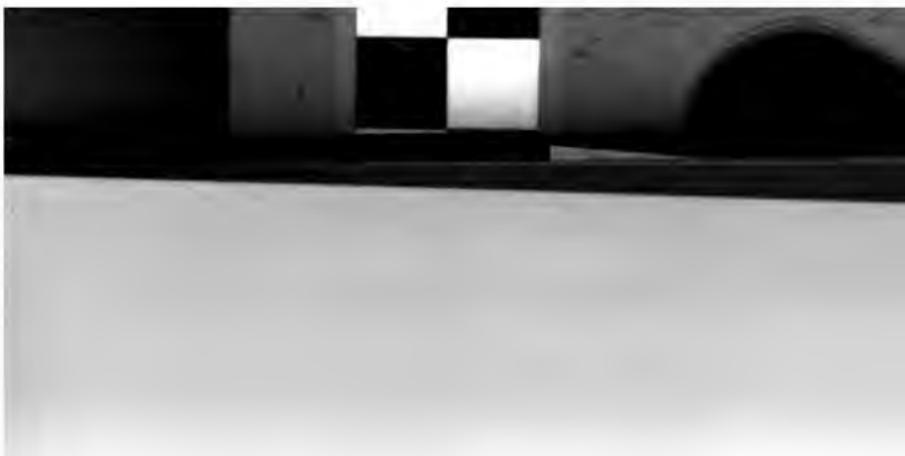
After this joyful beginning however, the work soon brought to a pause. The people round had seen the return of the Jews with envious and evil eyes. "The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin" who had interfered, are believed to have been the inhabitants of Samaria, their nearest neighbours and in a sense kinsmen. A mixed company in which a few legitimate remnants of the ancient Israelites had so mixed themselves among the successive waves of colonists that they were longer to be identified as of one nation or another. The invaders with the liberality of heathenism had adopted the God of Israel into their Olympus, willing to share an occasional act of worship between Him and Baal. Their jealousy of the sudden invaders who had thus taken possession of a vacant place in which, haps, they now regretted not to have forestalled them, was mingled, perhaps, with some lingering shame in their own apostasy and desire to return to a religion which now seemed a passport to the favour of kings. "Be ye build with you," was what they said, "for we seek your God, as you do." The Jews repulsed these evil overtures with indignation. "Ye have nothing to do with us" they replied, "we ourselves together will be unto the Lord God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the King of Persia has commanded us." The result was a

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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which lasted for many years. They despatched letter-

had seized his throne. Orders were accordingly sent to stop the building, which was done by force, the Jews in Jerusalem being too few and unwarlike to stand against





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Temple would seem to have put an end to this disastrous

had gone up the hill to inquire into this wonderful undertaking: "Who commanded you to build this house, and to make up these walls?" he asked. The meeting took place, in all probability, outside the northern gate, as was usual unless, indeed, the satrap, in his surprise, pushed on into the interior, into the midst of the very courts themselves, not yet closed to Gentile feet, where the Tyrian masons were building, and the Levite overseers measuring and planning. Zerubbabel, of the house of David, a prince of a dynasty which had outlived many empires, and Jeshua the high priest, scarcely less dignified in descent, still more so in office, with many others of the leaders of the Jews, heads of well-known families, met the Syrian prince with a demeanour which he, in high authority himself, would be able to appreciate. "We asked their names also to certify them," he says, reporting to his master their statement that their permission to rebuild the Temple of the God of heaven came from Cyrus himself, who had given them back out of his treasuries "the golden and silver vessels of the house of God which Nebuchadnezzar took." "Now, therefore," says the Satrap, "if it seem good to the king, let there be search made in the king's treasure-house, which there is at Babylon, whether it be so." Tatnai must have been impressed by the wonderful work of these men, which was not for their own benefit but for the house of "the great God, the God of heaven and earth," not the God of the Jews, it will be remarked. Nothing so remarkable had come under his cognisance before. This people had travelled over hills and deserts, a long and weary journey to a ruined town, away from their safe establishment in Babylon; for what? For this house of God. It is clear that the governor had no

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roused by the exhortations of the prophets, the strong outcry of Haggai, the happy visions of Zechariah. There is a serious interest in all he writes, a desire to do justice to such singular enthusiasts, and to have a sufficient warrant for their work, with which he has no

dained by Cyrus are much larger than those of the Temple of Solomon, but, on the other hand, "the day of small things" mentioned by Zechariah would evidently seem to refer to the comparative insignificance of the building; and Haggai asks, "Who is left among you that saw this house in her first glory? and how do you see it now? is it not in your eyes in comparison of it as nothing?" This, however, was said while the work was still incomplete, and when the two or three venerable fathers who might survive, if any such were, had shaken their heads in the habitual usage of old age over the possibility that such raw new walls could ever equal the Temple which they saw, more glorious than ever reality was, through the mists of childish remembrance far away. Such old men as could have seen "the house in her first glory" must by that time have reached the extreme limit of mortality, nearly a hundred years. It is very possible, as so often happens in human affairs, that both of the differing views on this subject may be true—that the second Temple was larger than the old according to the stipulations of Cyrus, but that it was very far from being so richly and lavishly decorated, a thing almost certain in the circumstances of its reerection.

The record here stops, its special object being accomplished; and the personal narrative of Ezra begins. Whether he was the author of the previous piece of history, or merely its editor, is not known nor is it of the slightest importance. It was natural that it should be written by one who witnessed that remarkable episode, and there are some touches in it such as that of the mingled sound of joy and weeping at the beginning of the work which could only have been made by an actual spectator; but the chief figures of Zerubbabel and Joshua

I.]        **THE RETURN AND RESTORATION.**        377

diate follower of theirs, and may simply have been put together by Ezra from notes or oral report. The greater part of the generation which had built the Temple, and re-established the city, had passed away before he ap-

Ion, apparently holding office in the government there, although his special studies had been in the law of Moses. But the fact that "the king granted him all his request" shows that he had attained, as so many of the Hebrews did, great influence and favour with the reigning potentate. This is calculated to have been Artaxerxes or Xerxes Longimanus, the grandson of Darius, so that the space of rather more than half a century occurred between the completion of the Temple under the protecting edict of Darius, and the visit of Ezra. In the meantime there had occurred in Shushan, which was the residence of the great Persian monarch, that curious story of Providential guidance as well as palace intrigue which we call the book of Esther, a proof of the very general prevalence of Jewish influence in the highest centres of Babylon, which, no doubt, accounts for the almost invariable protection and favour with which Jerusalem was regarded. Ezra had, no doubt, heard rumours of the laxity of morals in the holy city, and that there were some points in which reformation was most important if the independence and unity of the nation were to be preserved. It would almost seem as if he had laid his anxieties before the king and drawn that monarch into a certain sympathy with them: so that Artaxerxes himself, the husband of Esther, and naturally as may be supposed taking an interest in her race, was led to charge the scribe with a special imperial mission, to visit and inquire into the spiritual state and position towards the law of the ancient people, "to inquire concerning Judah and Jerusalem, according to the law of God which is in thine hand." That this was a part only of Ezra's charge, and that he was also an imperial com-

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information. That he had a very special mission for the Jews is, however, evident from the fact that he was permitted to take with him as many of the remaining exiles as desired to go, some two thousand in all—

contribution from the king and his counsellors "freely offered" this time "unto the God of Israel," a title, no doubt, proudly imposed by the Israelite official as claiming the great God of heaven to be especially his own. The mandate is urgent and detailed, ordering a subsidy up to "an hundred talents of silver, and to a hundred measures of wheat, and to an hundred baths of wine, and to an hundred baths of oil, and salt without prescribing how much" which was to be supplied by the local government "beyond the river." Ezra would be a most welcome visitor to Jerusalem with all those treasures. By this time the common tenor of life must have been re-established there, although, no doubt, much was yet to be desired, and little had been done towards the "beautifying of the Temple," the purpose for which the gifts of Artaxerxes were made.

The work of Haggai and Zechariah was long over, and

tion to them of another conquering people whose faith was in one great God of heaven like theirs produced a

commission than anything that could concern Jerusalem and Judah. It would seem to have given him a charge over the Samaritans also, who in a certain sense knew the laws of God and in an imperfect way retained the sacrificial system and the worship of the Jews; and also over all scattered knots of people settled on the south side of the Euphrates who might be of Jewish origin and faith. But Jerusalem was the chief point of the journey, and we hear of none of his other proceedings outside its walls.

He had scarcely arrived, however, and made his sacrifices, and paid his vows, when the princes and heads of the restored community came to him with their statement of the circumstances which had alarmed the visitor when he heard of them in distant Babylon, and which filled the magnates of Jerusalem with anxiety and perplexity. Not only the common people but the priests, the Levites, the very princes themselves were involved in this national offence. It was the beginning of a change which they felt might bring back all the evils and the offences of old; for who could secure the children from following their mothers' faith, or make true Hebrews of those who had been brought up to consider Baal as equally sacred and powerful with the great God who

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*that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because*

would not leave a remnant to escape, seems at once to have penetrated the heart of the multitude. No doubt rumours of the special object of the great envoy had already spread among them, quickening their apprehension. Only a small portion of them had really offended as yet, but they were all so closely related, and the sense of their unity as a nation was so strong, that the sin which struck at the very root of that unity and special

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"In the ninth month, on the twentieth day of the month," that is to say in December, the rainy season—and prob-

ment, and would probably consent with the patience of a creature born to slavery, to the fate which she would know must have come sooner or later. It was according to all modern codes a severe act; but it was one of the utmost necessity and wisdom for the interests of the Jews, and for the preservation of their national life—the thing, which having learned more or less their terrible lesson, they now felt must be preserved at all hazards and by any sacrifice.

Whether Ezra disappeared altogether from the scene after this trenchant act of reformation, whether he went back to Babylon to give in his report, and discharge himself of the responsibility of the supervision committed to his hands, we are not told; but many years elapse before we find him again in the exercise of his office as scribe and teacher in Jerusalem. A certain modern touch is in his character and appearance altogether, which is that of a man full of supreme earnestness for his work, and perception of national necessities, yet capable as a few reformers have been in all ages of seeing the advantage of a startling appeal to the popular imagination, a certain histrionicism, if we may use the word, a perhaps studied demonstration of real feeling, an outburst having all the force of the uncontrollable, yet so to speak, done on purpose for the sake of the impression to be produced, although absolutely true in the emotion expressed. There is no real contradiction in these words, and nothing in the least false in the course of action. He might have retired into his chamber, and uttered with strong crying and tears that prayer and confession which he made on his knees with his arms stretched out, before the Temple gates, with all the startled people crowding round, overwhelmed by the contagion of that passionate sorrow and contrition. But nothing that he could have

the same effect as the overmastering remorse and appeal of that prayer, poured forth as on the impulse of the moment in the shock of the news, by the great visitor clothed in all the power of Babylon, who had come up with joy to worship in the city of his fathers, and had been there suddenly prostrated by the terrible information communicated to him. The effect upon the imagination and conscience of the assembled Jews was tremendous, as he had intended it to be; and yet in no

## CHAPTER II.

### NEHEMIAH.

THE mission of Ezra was a special one of deep importance to the Jewish nation as cutting off the possibilities of relapse into the one master-sin which had heretofore been their bane, and cleansing their internal economy; but it was brief and sudden and involved no external advance either in the great constructions going on on all sides, or the defence of the nation from its outward enemies. Another personage very unlike Ezra, but still more distinct and full of character, now appears against that tumultuous background of the Jewish capital, so full of rebellions and sudden repents, the rising and falling of a popular tide, more marked, perhaps, in its small stream of existence than it would have been within more extended limits. The Jews in Babylon fall altogether out, in a few generations, from the story of their nation; they had made their choice to remain there, in some cases, no doubt, willingly, in some with painful submission to a bondage of circumstances which they had not strength or courage to break. They had been on the verge of a universal massacre when saved by the interposition of Esther; they were subject to all the vagaries of a monarch's caprice and the hatred of a vizier; but at the same time they were wealthy and safe from want and the dangers of every day, which

CH. II.] THE RETURN AND RESTORATION. 389

satisfaction and joy blinded them a little to the dangers still surrounding that capital of their race, replanted in the midst of enemies, and with very ineffectual means of defence. They had already subscribed and offered a great deal for this vast national work: it is very probable that they now felt they had done enough.

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his period of service. "I had not been aforetime sad in

responsible authority in the city, but only a council of rulers, chiefly priests, with, perhaps, the advice and help of Ezra, whom we find once more in Jerusalem after an interval of twenty years, on the arrival of his successor in the Scripture records. Nehemiah took with him no such Jewish contingent as that which had followed Ezra: a significant fact as showing that the number of those willing to undertake hardship and unsettlement of life for the sake of their religion and nation was now exhausted. But the new Tirshatha had with him instead an escort of "captains of the army and horsemen" to guard him from the danger of the way.

For three days after his arrival Nehemiah would seem to have rested from his journey and apparently said nothing of his special object. We may understand that he was received and acknowledged at once as in authority over the city, the priests being in no condition to oppose any of his requirements, and probably having no wish to do so: for the succour of a strong officer of the empire backed by certain spears, would be no small comfort to them in face of the continued strife round about, and the machinations of enemies not powerful enough to attack but continually threatening. After this period of rest Nehemiah rose one night when all was still in the city—"I and some few men with me"—and went out to reconnoitre. His attendants followed on foot while he rode round Jerusalem, coming out by "the

ii.] THE RETURN AND RESTORATION. 393

Siloam and the gardens of Onkel till he reached the

The members are to receive no private communication. It was on the next morning, probably, about half past seven, that he called the rulers together, and informed them that he had a special mission.



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the same time  
as much  
as I can  
and then  
I will go  
and see  
what I  
can do  
about it.

II.]

THE RETURN AND RESTORATION.

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And then the plan, which, no doubt, he had matured in his mind during the long days and nights of his journey, probably with the help of some rude image of the beloved city such as that upon Ezekiel's tile, or the detailed and often-repeated descriptions upon which the childhood of the sons of the captivity was nourished—was carried suddenly and at once into effect. When the common crowd opened its eyes in the morning there was already a murmur of activity in the city, of the masons' mallets and the movements of the labourers, and the sound of the great stones rolled or lifted into place, proceeding from every quarter. If there were any of Sanballat's or Tobiah's belongings in that large chamber in the Temple which Eliashib had cleared out for them of the stores for which it was properly intended —how astonished must they have been to see Eliashib himself superintending the building of his portion of the wall, he and his brethren with their robes girded, if not with trowel and mallet in their own hands, yet, no doubt, busy in the humbler occupation of bringing up

opened the road to Galilee. Whether these indications are to be trusted or not it is difficult to make out; the important matter is that more than thirty groups of labourers, each under the command of a well-known member of the community, began at once on the great work: each pursuing his neighbours in the emulation of eager and patriotic toil, not a matter of words but of

ful outcry gives us a still clearer view of what was going on; for this, no doubt, was exactly what they were doing, raising the great stones to which the burning had done little harm out of the masses of broken lime and fragments, and placing them once more in their old courses. Tobiah the Ammonite was more spiteful still. "That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall break down their stone wall," cried this enraged looker-on whose wish was father to the thought. "Hear, O our God!" cries Nehemiah in the fervour of his indignant earnestness, "for we are despised!" But the rage of disappointed malice only confirmed the resolution of the city. "So built we the wall: for the people had a mind to work."

When, however, Sanballat saw that his floutings had no effect he and his friends seem to have held a consultation whether it would not be a wise thing to make a raid upon Jerusalem before the fortifications were completed. No doubt there were plenty of spies and informers on both sides ready to run with a piece of news from one to another; and Nehemiah was not long in hearing of the intended movement against him. The builders on the north side, which was that most open to attack, would also be aware of the comings and goings, the bands from different quarters drawing together, making a brave show upon the rising ground, the little troops of horsemen who would ride down the Kedron valley, and point out to each other with flouts and shouts of laughter the progress of the work, such walls! as a fox might break down. The wall had risen to about half its intended height by this time round the entire town, one band of workmen meeting another; and the labour was severe. There was "much rubbish" which, ~~and made~~ ~~and made~~ ~~and made~~ lay under the foot of the builders



To face page 398.

JAFFA GATE.



of burdens" began to give way. Then the Jews who had been called up from the country to aid in the work were full of alarm for what might befall them as they returned to their villages, especially those who dwelt upon the north road towards Samaria—an alarm increased by urgent messages from their homes, from timorous wives or parents left behind, begging them to return

in the encampment on the hill where the Samaritans lay and looked on, and raged and wondered, it is clear that the Tirshatha was there with his trumpeter ready to sound the alarm, so that every man might throw down his trowel or his hod and catch up his bow or draw his sword, while he rushed towards the centre of action. Never was a patriotic drama more strenuous, picturesque, and spirit-stirring, with such mingled sounds of labour and war, of a strong race on the alert, valiantly and cheerfully contending for its life. The men were inspired at once with patriotism and strong indignation and a sense that this was the crisis upon which the fate of

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his right in virtue of his office to receive from those under him an abundant revenue for his support and that of his household—he had accepted nothing. Former governors had been chargeable to the people, “had taken bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants have rule over the people: but so did not I, for the peace of God.” He describes besides, in this sometimes almost contemptuous summary, how he had held a sort of royal state, an open table, entertaining like a king, a hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers daily “besides those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us,” a curious addition. Thus he lived, always with a lofty scorn of all meanness, giving freely, accepting nothing, with perhaps, we may divine, a certain scorn as of a high official of the empire, for the pettiness of the province, notwithstanding his passionate devotion to the holy place and to the faith of his fathers. Such a mingling of high enthusiasm for a great object, with an impassioned disdain of all the small self-interests that gather about it and the unelevated persons who carry it out, is not unusual in great national

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THE RETURN AND RESTORATION.

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tions falling into certain perforations in it, which rises and drops by means of a wooden key. The procession was attended, each half of it by the priests with the trumpets, and a choir of singers, singing, perhaps, those songs of the pilgrims with which the long and dreary way from Babylon had been lightened. They circled the city from the great pools of Gihon in the west, and the stairs of the city of David, that bridge that traversed the Tyropœon valley, and along the irregular length of the north wall whence they could see the tents of their Samaritan enemies on the hill of Samuel or Mount Scopus, so often thereafter to be crowned with the armies of more formidable invaders: while the other party made the round on the southern side above the valley of Hinnom, and along the front of the Temple, both coming together with whatever ensigns of triumph they might carry, with the glowing colour of Eastern gala dress, and the white robes of the Levites, and the sound of the singing and shouts of the multitude, until the marching lines met on the ramparts of the Temple wall, opposite Olivet, and stood awhile to make their thanksgiving, governor and princes and priests and people: "and the singers sang loud": for every evil propheey was confounded and every fear quenched and the work accomplished, so that all the world might see. "Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: their wives also and their children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jeru-

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people wept." But the Tirshatha, wise and wholesome man, would not have his triumph spoiled. He was a peremptory ruler, strong in his ideas of work and recom-

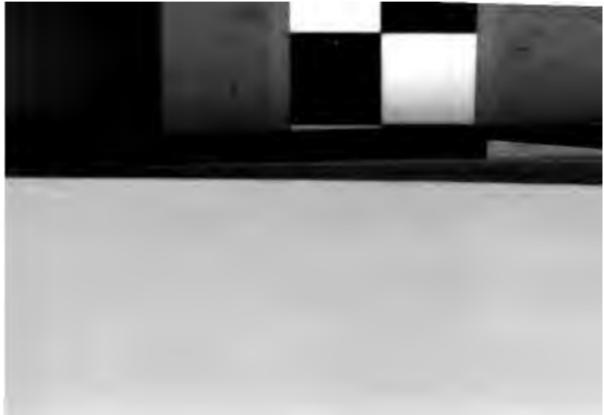


ii.] THE RETURN AND RESTORATION. 409

fat, and divide the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto the Lord: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your ~~strength~~."

failure: and we can scarcely help thinking of Knox and his followers and of the Covenants of Scotland, when we read the list of "those who sealed" and "entered into a curse and into an oath to walk in God's law"—that is, who invoked a curse upon their own heads if they did not keep that vow. No doubt it gave a solace to the heart of Nehemiah to leave them so bound against all further possibilities of transgression—bound by seal and signature, though few of them, we may believe, could write—signs of a bargain which would be, it was to be hoped, more effectual than private resolution: to do all they ought to do, to make no mixed marriages, hold no market on the Sabbath day, and maintain the ordinances of the Temple, the sacrifices and the tithes, the first-fruits and offerings. When these vows were put upon parchment and laid up in the holy place was not all done that could be done to bind a people at once so fickle and so strange?

But whether the Tirshatha remained to govern the city, or whether he went back to pour out again the wine of Artaxerxes, or to be promoted after all his labours to some more important post in the imperial government we know nothing. The record ends here so far as the Scripture history is concerned, leaving Jerusalem in outward peace, but as yet little more than a ghost of herself, with elaborate laws, and a hierarchy carefully arranged, yet but half populated, with a few scattered villages alone to keep up her prestige and her claim to be considered among the nations. The stronghold, however, was again safe from all but imperial arms, the sanctuary cleansed, the race for once convinced that apart from God and his Divine protection they had no standing or security in



### CHAPTER III.

them does the curious mixture of pure legend show itself in mingled extravagance and subtlety, as in some of the

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The critics who consider this to be the way in which the whole Scriptural record was built up have not apparently remarked this real illustration of what the outcome is in such a case.

against many incursions of the continually modified and altered empire of the north: until altered itself by that partition of the ancient world which follows the conquests of the Greeks. There is, however, a special bitterness in the many wars of devastation which swept over the devoted city, which adds something more than the mere horrors of invasion, terrible as these were, to her tragic history. The continual insults to her religion, the swine sacrificed on the altar, the overthrow of all her characteristic customs, done with a fury and ferocity which seem special to this place alone, is very remarkable. One would imagine that the very existence of such a stronghold of national worship folded in the hills was an affront and offence to the world about. They left the plains on either side, to crush that sentiment of freedom, of individuality, and what was still more, of unbroken immemorial faith, which stood in the middle

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the heroes of Judah, the mighty men of valour, David and his captains, stout Joab who feared no face of man. They had to form their band and flee to the mountains forthwith, leaving their little abandoned town to the mercy of the invaders: but when they were protected by the invulnerable hills the party of the patriots grew daily. Intolerable oppression had at last roused beyond endurance a too long-suffering race. Some, we are told, not brave enough for open resistance, fled to the wilderness hoping to be safe there, but were overtaken by an expedition from Jerusalem who assailed them on the Sabbath day. The multitude, unwarlike, unofficered probably, clinging with heroic weakness to their rule, would not fight on that holy day, and were massacred like sheep. "They answered them not, neither cast they a stone at them, nor stopped the places where they lay hid, but said, Let us die in our innocence: heaven and earth shall testify for us that ye put us to death wrongfully." "A thousand souls of men," whole families, including wives and children (who probably made resistance impossible) thus perished without striking a blow.

These meek religious martyrs, however, raised such a storm in Judah as carried all barriers away. "When Matthias and his friends understood thereof they mourned for them right sore. And one of them said to another, 'If we all do as our brethren have done, and fight not for our lives and laws against the heathen, they will now quickly root us out of the earth.' At that time they decreed saying, 'Whosoever shall come to make battle with us on the Sabbath day we will fight against him: neither will we die all as our brethren that were murdered in the secret places.'" This is the first ap-

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and perverse minds the dominion of idols. They had

itish nations, when Damascus and then Nineveh and then Babylon were the homes of the conquerors, and Greeks and Romans were unknown. Lysimachus, Nicænor, Gorgias, are the titles of the opposing generals, Menelaus is an apostate priest, "Quintus Memmius and Titus Manlius, ambassadors of the Romans" send letters to the Jews. All is changed from the old world, yet there is little change in the one obstinate self-contained people which holds the central place, though visibly surrounded by supernatural help as it never was in the older authentic days.

The same thing had happened to Jerusalem which had happened to her before. The city "lay void as a wilderness, the sanctuary was trodden down, and aliens kept the stronghold: the heathen had their habitation in the place: and joy was taken from Jacob, and the pipe with the harp ceased." But the people were no longer captive nor languishing terrified in scattered villages. They ranged the country outside as David's bands did, under their bold leader "who was like a lion," always with their eyes fixed upon the deserted domes and towers, the silent and desolate city over which the flag of the conqueror waved from the heights of Zion. Other cities have been dear, but none so prized, so sacred as this. To think of the abomination of desolation in those deserted courts and profaned sanctuaries was anguish to every Jew. They roamed the country round always with longing looks reverting to their holy and beautiful place: lying in wait for every advantage, rushing down from their mountains upon the unexpecting army of their adversaries when the other half of it had become involved in those rocky gorges in pursuit of them: too rapid to await attack, taking everywhere the offensive,

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by the unexpected favour of the Persian emperors to have set up their little royalty again in the face of Cyrus and Cambyses—and the race of David had sunk, it would seem, under the level of what is required for a ruler even in a subordinate position. The race of Levi had survived in greater strength. The families of the high priests could not lose their sacred right of domination descended to them from far antiquity—long before kings were thought of and from the direct appointment of God. Far more than the scattered and impoverished house of David had they retained their traditions and their power: and while the family of Zerubbabel sinks into the rank of private persons that of his colleague the priest goes on in unquestioned authority. Eliashib, though not blameless in the matter of life and discipline, had succeeded Jeshua in Ezra's time, while the sons of Zerubbabel had gone back to the original pastures at Bethlehem, from which David had been taken to be made a king. And when we come to the time of the Maccabees it is in a priestly family that the hero, or rather heroes, father and sons emulating each other in valour and patriotism—and the only real successor of the chivalrous shepherd of Palestine.

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ite) Antipater the father of the great Herod. During

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no harm to that strangely beloved and defended shrine. He restored Hyrcanus to be chief priest, and taking from the Jews the cities they had seized in better times, "con-

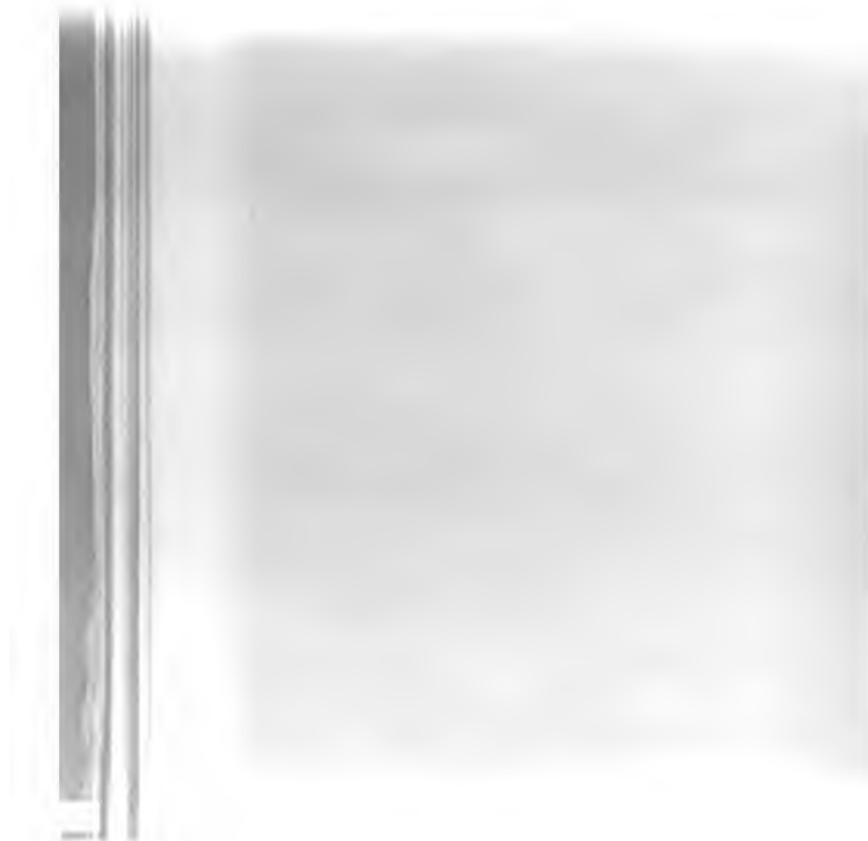
while beautifying the great centre of the most intensely exclusive religion of the world. "Here," says Josephus, "is a mountain whose summit lifts itself to a vast height, and close by a hollow at its base, a gloomy cavern opens from below, in which a yawning chasm descends abruptly to an immeasurable depth, containing a vast collection of still water hitherto found unfathomable by any length of line." Thus is described the picturesque cliff and bubbling waters of Banias, once known by the name of Caesarea Philippi, the most northern spot, so far as we know, of our Lord's journeys, where Peter's great confession was made. Perhaps these superlative adjectives applied thus to a woodland dell may make it more comprehensible that the soft slopes on the northern side of Jerusalem should appear to Pompey's troops a "frightful ravine."

The reader knows what wonderful event happened in the last days of Herod, and how, believing as he did, that One was born who was sent by God to be King of the Jews, One of whom the prophets had written, and of whom his learned councillors could tell him even the very place of the promised birth: this strange Eastern potentate in his madness put forth a bloody and a dreadful hand to nullify if he could the decree of heaven. That such a thing should have been done by an unbeliever would be natural enough—but the act of Herod was that of a man who had no apparent doubt that it was the actual ordinance of God, long ago settled and foretold, which he had attempted to make impossible. Such subtleties of the primitive mind are beyond comprehension—*all* the more as the man who did so had been a powerful guardian and protector of the nation. Thus his was the hand which not only tried to cut off the final and

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SOURCE OF JORDAN.





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PART IV.—THE FINAL TRAGEDY.

**CHAPTER I.**

**THE SON OF DAVID.**

aries of Israel. The Samaritans still occupied the central portion of Palestine, unchanged in the divergency of faith which became conspicuous after the captivity, and holding an attitude of hostility more or less marked, though kept by imperial supervision from all overt acts. The difference, always difficult to define between that mixed race, which, if only half Jew, was yet not pagan, and insisted upon its traditions as much as did the orthodox Judean and its kindred of Judah, had consolidated into a sort of national opposition. "The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans." But the northern part of the kingdom had returned to its allegiance to Jerusalem, and was inhabited by vigorous and devout

ple that walked in darkness had already seen a great light. True piety had found refuge among them, even before the Light that lighteth every man had been revealed.

It was among these simple northern folk that God found the pure and tender maiden who was to be the instrument of His purpose. She was found in no beautiful mediaeval hall, half oratory, half palace, such as are those scenes in which painters have enshrined her lowly sweetness. Was it, perhaps in a rock-hewn chamber in a humble dwelling of Nazareth, dim and cool and impervious to the blazing day: or, perhaps, as she sat and mused in a quiet moment with her pitcher at the well, that the great radiance of the angel came into the quiet, and Mary heard those strange words which have mingled in the prayers of so many generations since then: "Hail, Mary, full of grace!" It was a greeting that troubled her, so much too reverential and important as it seemed for a humble villager, as if she were a great lady. But when she heard the after-message, so much more wonderful than any that was ever given to the greatest empress in the world, her sentiments seem to have undergone a change. She was no longer troubled as by a greeting more than was her due. In the region of religion all things are possible. As soon as she became aware of what the real question was, the devout calm of her nature returned to her. Behold the handmaid of the Lord! disturbed to be approached with external honour that was not her due, but receiving in an awed yet undoubting calm, of deep reverence and obedience, the far greater and more wonderful commission communicated to her direct from God.

It is evident that the appearance of the angel in itself

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disturbed by any terrible sense of the miracle to be accomplished in her. The whole history of her race was miracu-

erer about to come. Nor is it necessary to account for her attitude and state of mind by special reference to the temper of her time. The pure-hearted and visionary girl, most delicate flower of human kind, is always more or less in the same mental condition, disturbed to be greeted as a princess, not disturbed by heavenly communication of a great mission, embarrassed by the one, finding the other even natural. Joan of Arc was not surprised to find herself a captain and leader of the armies of France. A devout and simple acquiescence in inconceivable mysteries

tion of Jew, Moslem, and Christian having so identified it through all the ages. There is a recess where the carpets and mats would be laid just opposite the rock-hewn manger, and the other rocky chamber in which the mild neighbours, half seen, chewing the cud in harmless



RACHEL'S TOMB, ON THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM.

quiet, would stand beyond. The manger is now replaced with one of marble, a silver star shines on the floor, the place is full of twinkling candles in the darkness, crossed by an intense blue ray of light from the rocky stair,

descriptions, the possibilities of the scene. The dazzled

told in a few words. Nazareth in its little amphitheatre of low hills, was the most tranquil home for the growing life, not like Bethlehem with the heights and hollows of Judah all spread around it, and the associations of its royal race—but a humble little town hid amid its trees, with little prospect of any kind, apart from all high roads and channels of communication with the great world. That yearly pilgrimage to Jersalem would be the great event of its village life, a wonderful incident



CONVENT OF THE NATIVITY, BETHLEHEM.

indeed breaking the homely level of every day, a thing to be looked forward to for the whole year. It was not till the son of Mary, the son of the carpenter, had attained the age of twelve, the early maturity of the East, that He joined that jubilant throng, a great crisis in the life of a boy, and marking a personal era. The first time in which the pupil, the postulant, ascended the Temple stairs and went up into the house of God, taking

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"Who by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended"

are too sacred in the silence of the record for other handling. And it is not till "the Lord" came "suddenly to his Temple" that the veil is for a moment withdrawn.

That Temple, the centre of Hebrew life, the symbol of national greatness, so often destroyed, so often restored, so long and mysteriously preserved through all the ages, takes a singular and altogether novel place in the experiences of the man Christ Jesus who came to abrogate it, and wind up the economy of which it formed so great a part. He seems to have sought it during the years of his ministry as the centre of all his own pursuits and occupations, but not with the feeling of those who took pleasure in the stones of Sion and to whom her very dust was dear. From the first the Temple is doomed in his eyes, a thing awaiting its destruction; and, if he gazes mournfully upon its beauty and splendour, something of the holy indignation of one to whom all the lost opportunities and divine purposes travestied and mistaken, of which it is the embodiment, are ever present,



suing them to the end of their futile arguments with a *cui bono?* making them as fools to themselves by some piercing interrogatory. It was his first inspection of his Father's house, from the point of view of human intelligence, and, no doubt, his childhood afforded an excuse and explanation of that one appearance, which could not have been continued without premature revelation of his mission in the after years, when he must have come up with his family again and again, silent and dutiful, fulfilling all righteousness. The boy could do what the young man could not without betraying himself.

And who shall penetrate the mystery of these silent years during which the Son of God grew in wisdom and stature in the calm of the little Galilean city? The still greater calm of the common human folk who surrounded that place and did not see what was the wonder that encircled Jesus, the son of Joseph, is the most wonderful thought of all. His brothers or cousins James and Judas must have known every feature of his life, and, perhaps, there is something in that familiarity of boyhood which gives to the after-teachings of James, so concise and practical, an air of more complete devotion to the outside duties of the Christian life than to the contemplation of the Divine Master. But among all who walked those familiar paths, and passed him with a morning greeting, and saw him take his way when the day's work was over to the solitude of the hill, to seek the Divine society from which he was an exile—would there be none who penetrated that disguise and knew that Messiah had come? "His mother kept all these sayings in her heart"—doubtful, too, towards what they were tending, pondering many times we may be sure that prophecy of his earliest infancy "a sword shall pierce through thine own heart





Perhaps she hoped, with fond denials to herself of any power that could harm one so divine, that the prophecy might fail; perhaps looked forward, with the all-submission of her own youth, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." to the future so full of awe yet of hope, but knew



Perhaps she hoped, with fond denials to herself of any power that could harm one so divine, that the prophecy might fail; perhaps looked forward, with the all-submission of her own youth, "**Behold the handmaid of the Lord,**" to the future so full of awe yet of hope, but knew nothing of all that was to be.

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" It would almost seem that he was surprised that she did not understand; as he was surprised, notwithstanding that he knew all that was in man, at the incapacity of his disciples long after to know what he could mean.

It is with hesitation and faltering that we venture to

one chapter of history, which is of more importance to the human race than everything beside.

I venture, therefore, to take with reverence from the



second Elias, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, he who had been a hermit living in solitary places out of the way of men, had, no doubt, forgotten if in his desert life he ever knew, the aspect of his young kinsman—until the Divine sign was given which pointed him out as the Lamb of God. After the revelation had been made, and his human life thus consecrated to his mission, Jesus returned to his natural home; or rather it would be better to say, to the shores of the Lake of Galilee which was a day's journey from Nazareth, but with which he had probably some connection as so much of his time was spent there. His mother, perceiving that his life was now to be shaped on other lines, possibly as the time went on abandoned her household and followed him there in order to care for the wants of external necessity; or still more probably, her husband being dead, was naturally devoted to the care of her son and transferred herself to the place that suited him best. At the present moment, however, she was probably still resident in Nazareth, and he travelling towards that lowly dwelling-place when he paused at the village of Cana to attend the marriage feast. "Both Jesus was called and his disciples to the marriage," which was probably an important event in the countryside, though the bridegroom was no wealthy inhabitant, but only a kindly connection or neighbour of the same humble position as his guests.

Perhaps it was to give his attendance at this feast, the wedding of some one who had been a companion of his childhood, that Jesus paused on his way from the baptism in Jordan to his own home. Recent researches of the Palestine Exploration officers, most interesting of all investigations into the past, have discovered a spot on Jordan still bearing the name of Abirah, so like the



by some attraction they scarcely understood, who watched eagerly all his movements, to justify to themselves the step they had taken. There is no appearance that except by those two the miracle called for anything more than a little wonder, as to where the astonished bridegroom could have got it, that marvellous wine.

There has been little said, I think, among the many discussions of the supernatural, of the entire naturalness of these miracles. The initiatory miracle of all is, of course, the Person by whom they are performed; and if it can be proved that there have been others like him in this world, and that the records of history contain another who, according to the common judgment of humanity, may be placed by his side or near him, then I have no doubt the lesser argument might come in: but granted the far greater miracle of the two, the extreme naturalness of the others is, I think, to a simple mind, the most wonderful thing about them. We are disposed nowadays to smile at them as proofs, feeling that our Lord is his own transcendent proof and that in his great presence it is a kind of well-meant and pious blasphemy to produce any testimonials as it were to his character. The Christian of the nineteenth century would probably be easier in his mind if the miracles were put out of the question, being a man of his time, as the writers who recorded them were men of their time and loved every detail of every prodigy. But even that sentiment it appears to me is wrong, and calculated to take away something from the benignity of that Friend who was what no other man or friend has ever been. How could he hold his hand being what he was? how refuse what those helpless neighbours wanted, whether wine for their feast or, still more, healing for their sick?



I.]

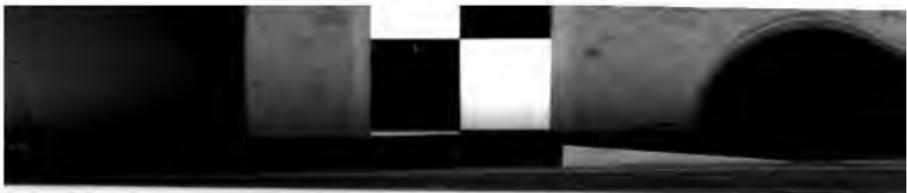
THE FINAL TRAGEDY.

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interest awakened by that boyish apparition may have faded away in the quiet of the years as the bystanders perceived that the precocious boy was going no farther, but had sunk into the stillness of life as so many promising talents do. It might already be thought by some with disappointment that they hoped it was to have been he who should have redeemed Israel. This might probably cause still a certain curiosity about his presence, a lingering desire to know whether after all the prophecy



LAKE OF GALILEE: THE HORNS OF HATTIN, ON WHICH THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT WAS DELIVERED IN THE DISTANCE.



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The city lived by its sacred character, and the sale of the sacrifices must have been like the sale of indulgences in mediaeval Rome. It was the centre of religious agitations also, and there was nothing the population loved so much as controversy and the long-drawn quibbles about the law, and questions of form and ceremonial. Jesus of Nazareth had many things yet to do before He came to the concluding scene of all, and this is a strong argument against the occurrence of a preliminary driving out of the traffickers in the Temple which would have made a commotion in the city, such as he does not seem to have desired so early in his career.<sup>1</sup>

We may be allowed in all reverence to imagine the manner of this first public visit to Jerusalem. If the full revelation of his own mission had only been opened out to his manhood after the Baptism, as seems to be indicated, the previous glimpses and intuitions of divinity rising at once into full manifestation: our Lord must now have begun to regard the Temple and the city which had hitherto been to him the "Father's House"—in which he had fulfilled all the commanded rites, and performed the duties incumbent upon all pious Hebrews—in a different aspect. This wonderful Temple, the pride of the nation, was henceforward a thing about to dissolve and melt away. It was to be destroyed which had cost



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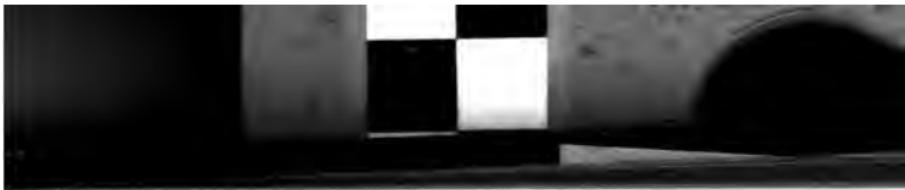
the Master's comment on this pride of the Jewish heart. And what strange words were those which came from the young Rabbi's lips? "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down." What an incredible, impossible thing to say! Herod's Temple stood in all its splendour before them, with its magnificent cloister, its beautiful gate, all the wonderful architecture of it, strong as the rock on which it stood—the courts full both of Jews and proselytes, every entry to the enclosure, every gate, filled with a moving, bright-coloured crowd. Perhaps the cicerones and eager guides scarcely heard this sentence in the eagerness of their explanations, and it was not till the little band of closest friends went out to the Mount of Olives, and sat there round him, gazing upon the shining walls where Jerusalem lay fair in the sun, that he explained to them what he meant. His human heart was sore for that dreadful necessity. Far more than of what he was himself to suffer did he think of this, returning to it with an anguish of lamentation again and again. O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! to which every heart had turned, of whom the captives in Babylon prayed that their right hand might forget its cunning if ever they forgot her, their chieft joy—and which that little band of pilgrims had approached, singing as they paced along the lingering ways, by Jordan and Jericho, from their lake side, that Sion was the joy of the whole earth, and that they were glad when it was said to them: "Let us go up into the house of the Lord." With what awe would they hear, looking over the valley at those white pinnacles and the great walls dazzling in the sunshine! though they probably soon forgot that impression with the unconscious incredulity of nature, and felt that what

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xxviii.—Then it was that when the woman of Samaria "



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up by rubbish, which lies close under the north-east angle of the Temple wall; but I believe that another situation has been suggested, near the present Church of St. Anne, by recent explorations.

A line of arched cloisters, a little colonnade, supported on five sets of pillars, the "five porches" of our translation, was on the bank, with steps descending to the water—a beautiful feature of Eastern architecture, very usual and especially necessary where so much ablution is used. Underneath the shade of these arches lay the sick folk who were waiting for the "troubling of the water," the effervescence and influx, as now explained, of the spring. Jesus and his followers passing by, strangers arriving from Bethany or some other of the villages near, or taking the quiet walk of a Sabbath day's journey to that favourite olive garden on the other side of the brook, which was so good a place of repose after the crowds of the city, ascended into the grateful shade and coolness of the little arcade. And there in the stillness of the Sabbath, no cure to be hoped for on that day, lay the poor man on his carpet, who had spent so great a part of his life awaiting the miracle. It is impossible not to feel that he was not a very worthy object of charity as we say, seeing that one of the earliest uses of his restored strength was to denounce his deliverer to the enemy. But the eye of the Lord fell upon him as he lay in his abandonment of misery. He might be the only sick man there, the others having been carried home who had friends, lest they should be tempted to shuffle down into the water and get themselves healed on the Sabbath day. But thirty-eight years lying there, waiting, with no one to help him, shows a man sadly without friends, perhaps an altogether destitute person—and the Divine pity is as the rain which falls upon

was unable to go to it, even so far as the descent of these  
steps.

ter spiritual way than to bind these ceremonial restrictions tighter, making of it, as has been already said, god in the place of their old idols whom they had grown. Most likely the apostles themselves were startled at the breach of the rigid bond which was one of most marked points of the Jewish economy; but I there was no explanation given as of the parables puzzled them, no announcement of a change of plan. It is curious to remark, in passing, that there was evidence no objection on the part of the Jews to the dinner-parties and entertainments of the Sabbath. These were admitted: it was the healing that was objected to. The modern champions of the Sabbatic law act in a contrary sense, and would, no doubt, permit the healing were possible, but not the feasts.

It would seem to have been on this occasion that Jesus for the first time began to teach in Jerusalem. And remarkable to note at once the changed tone of his course. He speaks not as he spoke in Galilee, instituting a new economy of life, that enlarged and altered the code of the Gospel, the supreme rule for the thought and the heart, which flowed from him, distilling the dew, in the early dawn of his ministry, a new relation, full of tenderness towards men, if also of the failing conflict between good and evil, the choice between God and man. But the Jews of Jerusalem were a very different kind of audience. In those courts of the Temple, where he now became a familiar figure, eager crowd which surrounded him was essentially polemical crowd, determinate and champions of their forenames among them would be the rabbis and scribes of the doctors, ever ready to draw him into controversy, the scribes with their trained and critical wits,

ment, controversy rather than teaching. No room nor possibility here for any Sermon on the Mount, no tender lingering of parable and similitude, of the images drawn from that smiling nature around, the sower sowing in the field, the white tower shining on the hill. To Nicodemus he had already abandoned that milder ground, and spoken of a change so fundamental that it was not too much to say, "Ye must be born again"; and when he takes his seat in those high places of Jerusalem, it is without hesitation or delay to put forth his own great claim, and assert his mission in the most uncompromising tones, while the highest intelligences of Israel stood

*hostilely silent, awaiting his words, the shadow of gloom hanging over him.*

natural student from internal evidence rather to have followed such an event as that of the raising of Lazarus. "As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will." "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." What could be more appropriate than this had it been said after the miracle of Bethany? It is rash for an ignorant person, unacquainted even with the laws of Scripture criticism and taking the history of the gospels like any other old and irregularly constructed history, to venture upon a suggestion, but it seems to me that in a natural sense the address which is given in the seventh chapter of St. John (vii. 16, 24), as delivered on a later occasion, would be more appropriate if it were substituted here for the wonderful discourse which I have had the boldness to say appears rather to have followed such a miracle as that of the raising of Lazarus. When our Lord says "I have done one work and ye all marvel," his words seem to bear a natural reference to something just performed of which all minds were full, rather than to an incident which, though unique in their experience and of the highest popular interest, had happened several months before. It is true that it was wonderful enough to have recurred to every one upon his next appearance, and to have raised again the former commotion: yet the words would be still more appropriate if it had just occurred and was the marvel of the moment in all men's minds. "Why are ye angry at me because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day?" he asks, that question evidently being uppermost in the minds of his hearers. It might, no doubt, have come back to them, in the great and sudden popularity of the miracle, as the cause of the anger.

who had so boldly set the law at defiance. I do not know enough of Biblical criticism to be aware whether such a suggestion has ever been made before. I venture upon it solely from a literary and natural point of view. It looks like a speech delivered on the moment, while still nobody was able to forget that extraordinary act, and the fact almost more extraordinary to the common people, and thrust into greater importance still by the rulers, that he had done this, a thing forbidden on the

expressive with all they were hearing and seeing, the company in which they spent their lives: while outside of all the multitude came and went, sometimes gathering in a mass when the voices dropped, and his alone, penetrating yet soft, would come forth upon the air thrilling all hearts, though with an argument not addressed to the crowd.

After this scene in which so great and startling a departure had been made from the formal traditions of the Jews, strained and amplified as they were by the work of many generations of ritualists upon the original



TIBERIAS: LAKE OF GALILEE.

teachings of the law, our Lord departed from Jerusalem as the other pilgrims would do and returned to Galilee. It is believed that the commotion roused by this visit was so great that he did not go up to the next Passover, but continued his work upon the shores of his favourite lake, and among the villages and towns of Galilee, specially in the great city of Capernaum, and the district about. The entire district of northern Palestine, indeed, from the Mediterranean to the great inland lake, which was of more importance to that country than the sea, was familiar with his footsteps; his centre of move-



met in the courts of the Temple, in the rejoicings of the feasts, or out in those green arbours which were planted on the housetops and in the open spaces of the streets, watching the strangers go by and greeting their friends from the country. “Where is he?” “Think you, will he come up to the feast?” “For there was much murmuring among the people concerning him;” and many discussions as to his character and claims among those groups in the leafy tents. “Some said he is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews.” The Jews here mentioned, as in all the accounts of the subsequent story, mean, as is plain, those described in the Old Testament as “rulers” or “princes,” at this time the Sanhedrim, the national government, a body made up of the chief priests, the scribes, or interpreters of the law, lawyers, or disputers on that all-prevailing subject, and members of that strictest sect of formalists, called Pharisees. The members of this governing body were not all pious, though their very livelihood depended upon the piety of the people. They contained within themselves the lively scepticism of the cynic as well as the obstinate formalism of bigotry: those who held all religion lightly and believed neither in angel nor spirit: and those who were bent on binding all human life in the bondage of a detailed and exacting system to which they added the glosses of their own interpretation, narrowing its divinity day by day. And they, too, no doubt, looked with all the heat and eagerness of the polemic for the appearance of that new and strange Teacher whom some of them had already met in the Temple, and some seen and questioned in Galilee: and of whom so many additional rumours of mysterious teachings and still more mysterious deeds had been heard. The writer of the

ing among that learned circle, the superior classes of the city. He knew the "murmurings" of the people, the questions from one to another, but not how they would ask each other at the meetings of the Sanhedrin "Will  
he . . . ?"

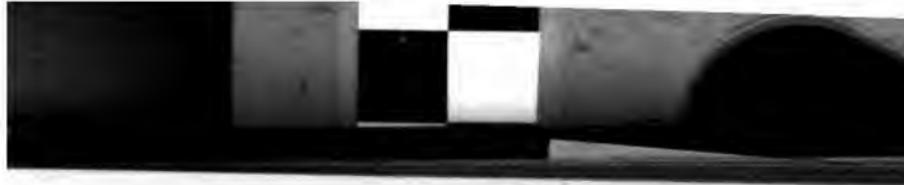
the crowd. "Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am," he cries, "in the Temple as he taught," raising his voice one cannot but feel to still the rising murmur. "And I am not come of myself, but he that hath sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him : for I am from him, and he hath sent me." The crowd seethed and raged around moved by conflicting impulses while he stood calm having thus proclaimed his high commission so that all could hear, dominating the tumult. "They sought to take him," those of Jerusalem who were on the side of the authorities—"but no man laid hands on him, for his hour was not yet come." There is, indeed, through every line a sense at once of bewilderment and of awe, the surging of the throng, the opinions as diverse as were the elements in that mingled multitude, the bigots with their large phylacteries, the country folk come up for their holiday, the more serious pilgrims not knowing what to think. "When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than this man doth?" rises another murmur in the crowd. We are told of no immediate miracle done in Jerusalem, but the Galileans must have brought a hundred tales of wonder, and even here there may have been wonders untold, blessings that radiated from him as he moved, and which penetrated the crowd with a sense of the presence of One in the midst of them who was not as any other teacher had ever been. These wonderings and questionings must have risen into all the force of a popular commotion towards the end of the day while the crowd was dispersing, repeating to each other those sayings which they could not understand. What did that prophet mean when he said "Yet a little while am I with you. Ye shall seek me and shall not find me?" "Whither will he go?" These last words, therefore, will be given to the dis-

of Messiah's mission, to gather back the lost tribes of Israel, to bring back the scattered race and make it one. "What manner of saying is this that he said?" they asked each other as they poured down across the bridge and by the great stairs as the evening was falling,

strange a new knowledge to his mind, with continually increasing interest and wonder though without any fur-

but we know that he had already made use of that image of the living water, so doubly full of meaning in the burning East, on various occasions; and the effect at this moment would appear to have been very great, insomuch that "the people when they heard this saying" said "of a truth this is the Prophet," while others said "*Truly this is the Chosen One!*"

more bold, challenging the very foundations of belief on which the whole system of Jewish religion rested, at the very outset of his ministry there? And their eyes were naturally fixed upon the multitude, as appears in the entire narrative of John, watching intently every change of sentiment, marking how the groups would form and melt away, how the bearded Jews would turn to each other, the women put forth a shriller voice of comment, heard here and there among the murmuring of the deeper tones. "Of a truth this is the Prophet!" "This is the Christ!" mingled with the corrective comment which asked "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" "Should he not come out of the seed of David, out of the town of Bethlehem?" Perhaps there were some there who remembered that scene in the Temple so long ago when old Simeon blessed an infant of that race, perhaps some who never could forget the children slain by Herod's cruel order that an infant King of the Jews might not escape him. But this wonderful figure in the midst of them, this voice which went to their very hearts, were they not those of a man from Galilee? Thus rose the tumult, the discussions, the close controversy, carried on half in pantomime among the crowd, which fixed the eyes of the beloved disciple, keen with anxiety for his Master's safety among this mass of excited men, and aware, perhaps, of the officers of the Sanhedrim who were making their way through the debating groups, yet who could not help hearing what he said, and could not escape the magic of his influence. The narrative is so instinct with life, so full of the breathless interest with which the writer saw and heard every new voice, every rising murmur, every sign of enthusiasm or perplexity, that our attention is almost



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moved as yet to put himself entirely on the side of the new prophet, and yet he could not hear this cheap condemnation of him (knowing well as he did that never man spake like this man) without protest. "Doth our law judge any man before it hears him?" he said. In such a case even the claim of justice sounds like that of a partisan. "Art thou also of Galilee?" cry the bigots, turning upon him "Search and know? Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." It was not much of an argument, perhaps, in reply to those who had heard and seen for themselves; but such as it was it silenced Nicodemus, not ripe for any great confession, as it had silenced the police and guardians of the public peace.

Nevertheless, this hot discussion also seems to have passed without consequence, for we find that early in the next morning our Lord came again to the Temple, where "all the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them." We are warned by all commentators not to take the wonderful and beautiful incident here inserted as part of the authentic record. It is suggested that the story of the woman taken in adultery is probably a very old fragment of tradition, preserved by being inscribed upon the margin of an early transcript of the gospel, and from thence transferred to the text by a succeeding copyist. It is one of the most remarkable and, we might say, characteristic incidents in the narrative, one of the most divine—in that austere calm of mercy, unpunishing but all-convicting, which affords us so wonderful a view of eternal purity yet compassion. The fact that it was not, as some say, in St. John's original gospel is by no means an assertion that it is not true, but only that it cannot be received as part of his witness to his Master. It must, therefore, be set aside in the history.



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a contemptuous abruptness, breaking in continually upon his discourse, "Where is thy Father?" "Who art thou?" they cried; "Does he mean to kill himself?" —to each other, probably with a harsh laugh of angry criticism, when he warns them, as he did the multitude, that the time is coming when they shall seek him but shall not be able to find him. In the midst of these interruptions there would seem to have gathered a larger company of the devout, who were in the constant habit of attendance at the Temple, while he spoke with the Pharisees: and the fragments of high exposition which these wranglers permitted to be heard reached the judgment, at least, if not the heart, of the wider group, which probably came by degrees towards the open portico to look into the chamber where he sat, discussing his own claim to be heard, with that unchangeable calm unmoved by any impertinence. And "many believed on him," a strange statement amid the opposition and angry contempt of the others, and the broken fragments which were all they could hear of what he said.

The inner circle, no doubt, dissolved from time to time, one set of questioners dispersing to betake themselves to some more important duty than that of cross-examining the Galilean—whom, probably, they thought a personage without danger now that the impulsive and easily-affected crowd had gone; while another took their places from among the fringe of silent listeners outside, whose faces bore signs of mere sincere interest and emotion. And there now ensued a very remarkable conversation between these semi-converts and the teacher to whom the hearts of all men were known. He looked at them as they drew near to fill up the places of those who had gone, and addressed them in words which express at once the misadventure which was still in their hearts



the doctrine which proclaimed them all the servants of sin, as other men were, as he went on; until at last their arrogance and pretence of superiority drew from him the tremendous accusation, "Ye are of your father the devil." Had the Pharisees, the original controversialists, come back by this time to take the part of their brethren? The words "Now ye seek to kill me" would seem to imply this: at all events, the Jews who were around, notwithstanding their partial belief, took up the challenge and threw it back upon himself.

Nothing could have been more dangerous for his own safety than such a discussion; for there was no longer round him the partial protection of the multitude, the contagion of their excitement and enthusiasm, but only the party whose entire principle of life was struck at the very roots by his assumption, and whom he never for a moment conciliates or yields to. The gentleness, the pity, the toleration, and profound understanding of every human difficulty which have been so conspicuous in him here disappear. The sinner, the publican, the beggar, all who were in misery, all who had learnt the impossibilities of this life and their own powerlessness, had been received by him with never-failing tenderness. Even after the young man who was not able to make up his mind to the sacrifice of his wealth and importance, Jesus had looked with an affectionate regret, not blaming, only longing that he might learn a truer insight. But with these men in the Temple all his tenderness disappears. Their confidence in themselves, and certainty that they are not as other men: their resistance to the spiritual meaning of the teaching which has compelled the acquiescence of their intellect, even when they are forced to believe in it: their determina-



record goes on, but vainly, who could doubt defeated by their own hearts that beat and their own arms that trembled: and "Jesus hid Himself and went out of the Temple," concealed by the dazzling and bewilderment that must have come to every eye.



water line—all is eloquent with recollections. Along the beach with its fishing villages, now mostly swept away, with its fishing cobbles laid up on the gleaming shore, and the soft hills on the other side in a haze of sunshine, the pilgrim feels as if there wants but a little, and he might himself see that wayfarer moving along, calling the sunburnt fishers from the boats, turning round benignant to see those two following who had been with John in the wilderness, pausing to cast a look of kindness upon the tax-gatherer at his bar, whom no man cared to speak to, but whom he bid to follow too. I can never forget a Sunday morning there, a rapture of light and freshness, soft waters rippling on the beach, soft airs lifting the opened hangings of the tent, the lake lying calm in the great glory of the sunshine, the distant outlines all veiled in mists of light, and a sense of still adoration, hushed as if by his very presence; nor the subsequent voyage across the lake to where the city which rejected him, that Capernaum which was exalted unto heaven, lies dumb in inarticulate ruin, not one stone standing on another, upon the water's edge. All blessed was the day, the light, the hour, even the sudden quick wind that sprang up, so that the boatmen, like those of old, had to "toil in rowing" against the rapid rising of the waves: all blessed, though filled since then with other poignant memories not to be forgotten, and the sigh never long

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*NOW LIVING THERE.*





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door intent upon the way, thinking of her sick child or ailing husband, as well as the groups in the synagogue and the coteries of the learned and superior persons, who even in these simple regions clustered round every centre of teaching. It must have been felt that when he returned again after all those controversies and commotions at Jerusalem, something decisive must happen, either the revelation in power of his office as Messiah, or some demonstration that it was not he which should restore Israel. Emissaries had come from Jerusalem, always with the intention of entangling him in his talk, of finding some occasion of judgment; and Pharisees and Sadducees, priests and scribes, were all on the alert to make this the final episode in a career which shook their world to its foundations.

Jesus himself would seem to have responded in the full force of his human nature, not less affected by factious opposition than by the tenderness of belief, to this great excitement of feeling. He had never hesitated to pronounce his judgment upon the formalist and the hypocrite; but now that all the powers of evil were rising against him, those lips which had spoken nothing but blessing, and whose familiar language was always that of love and charity, opened with lofty reproof, delivering the sentence of supreme disapproval, the "Woe unto you Pharisees and Sadducees, hypocrites," which joined together the two contending sects, as far as the poles apart from each other, but yet united in offence and bitter opposition to the springing of the new life. They harassed his steps wherever he appeared, making every detail of existence into a controversy, plying him with cunning questions, converting the very repast offered in seeming courtesy into an occasion of wrangling. The crisis was now so near that all ordinary restraints began to be broken.

they trod one upon another." When the rumour ran that he was coming, every house was emptied of its inhabitants, every corner filled with anxious gazers, the sick brought out and laid in the streets in all the horrors of primitive disease, an extraordinary feature of the scene, hailing him with a clamour of beseeching voices, maimed and wounded and forlorn, trembling with fever, writhing with pain, holding up withered limbs, and

Pharisees, with all their pretences and exactions, lying in wait, keeping an evil eye upon every movement, misinterpreting every act and word : while the multitude closed in around, all bent upon personal advantage, the recollection of those miraculous meals, the bread of Bethsaida, the wine of Cana, and, probably, who could tell, the hope of other gains and other prodigies from the hands which could command everything—filling their minds with a passion of desire and eagerness. The morning time of natural beneficence and harmony was over; they were ready to tear him in pieces, in faith as well as in opposition ; on the one side in fierce acquisitiveness to get what they wanted —on the other in hatred to sweep him out of their path: but the one as self-seeking as the other, a rage of belief as well as a rage of wrath. Between the crowd, hungry for miracle, impatient to have his mission proved by some great convulsion of nature, and his enemies, desiring a sign and watching his every movement, especially on the Sabbath day, which their vigilant superstition made anything but a day of rest—it would be

"Which nineteen hundred years ago were nailed  
For our advantage to the bitter cross,"

may have walked its unchanging streets. But of this journey there is no record except in a faint glimpse here and there showing the wandering party in unlikely places on that way. It is supposed to have been on their return towards Galilee that they passed by the

ter's emphatic approval and promise. The same journey has appeared to many commentators to make it likely that it was on some height of Hermon, under the level of the gleaming snows, that the Transfiguration took place, instead of upon the familiar Tabor of the home landscape, so round and green. But these can only be regarded as suggestions, since neither Hermon nor Damascus are mentioned in the record. It is difficult, however, to imagine what could have taken them to Cæsarea Philippi, unless they passed there in the course of a long journey: but Tabor would lie in their way on their return from "the borders of Tyre and Sidon" to Galilee, passing close by the little Nazareth, the name of which Jesus still bore, and where his early years were passed.

Whatever may be the fact about these details, which are of so much inferior importance, it is evident that the mystic incident of the Transfiguration took place about this time. It had become necessary that those disciples, who were soon to become apostles, the chosen witnesses of his life, as of his death and resurrection, should be prepared for the overwhelming revelation which awaited them, of the end, so far different from their hopes, of their Lord's ministry. It was while travelling by the

the office of his Master, the one utterance following the other with very little interval between; and the words of the Lord, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona," had scarcely died out of the air, before he had to bid the same eager speaker "Get thee behind me! for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of man." And it was very shortly after that he led them up into the high mountain apart, where they saw a glorious vision, and heard the conversation of heaven about that which they had refused to credit, that which their minds refused to receive, the decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem. It seems little likely that they derived much benefit from this at the time. The

been warned of what was to come. It was now that he called a little child and set him in the midst of them, and told these eager enthusiasts, still bent upon great place and promotion in the kingdom of Messiah, that they must become as little children if they would so much as enter into the kingdom of heaven; and instructed them that if a brother offended not seven times but seventy times seven he should yet be forgiven;



ON THE SHORES OF THE SEA OF GALILEE.

and gathering the little ones about him, commanding to forbid them not, blessed the little wondering group upon the way with a tenderness never to be forgotten. And it was now that, his divine heart more soft than ever in the solemnity of the approaching end, he looked upon and loved the young man who had kept all the Commandments from his youth up, yet could not find it in his heart to make confession to believe all he had to

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sense of supernatural power and desire to silence for ever every cavilling tongue, have desired to call down fire from heaven (in the exultation of their recent experience that even devils were subject to them in his name) to consume the churlish town—is so natural in the extraordinary circumstances that we feel with them the intolerable impatience which such an affront would produce. But when he turns and rebukes them, the higher nature is so natural, too, in supreme comprehension and pity that every thought is silenced. “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” It was John, the apostle of love, who had spoken—a man of vehement feelings, yet whose whole teaching and doctrine merged in his later life into the reiteration of the lessons of brotherhood. He would have destroyed in his hasty impulse, love of his Master being so hot in him: but he would have been the first to quench with tears and with horrified entreaties the ruin he had made. His Master knew him far better than he knew himself.

That there might be a certain justification for the villagers from an economical point of view in their refusal to receive him with the multitude which followed, an endless train—which, though no doubt it began to fall off as the distance from Galilee increased, was still a vast crowd of people enough to swamp any rural place—we may also allow. That they fell off by degrees is apparent from the broken words which came out of one band after another as they paused, reason compelling them to perceive that short of the tremendous decision to leave all and follow him, they had gone far enough. For Jesus was not now bound to the great feast in which all Jews were concerned, but to the Feast of the Dedication, at which attendance was not obligatory: and it was now winter when the reeds were at their wrost, and the

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and now more easily lodged in their decreased numbers  
and more intimate and near to each other than when  
they were scattered over the earth.

ence. This is the only mention of that little privileged household in any gospel but that of St. John: and the brother is not named who might be the master of another house, or absent upon his ordinary affairs, on the occasion

*of the marriage*

strange possibility that it might come true: for he was no believer, not a person of awakened intelligence at all:



In the meantime, while that argument went on would seem to have been quiet in the Temple above. most continuous discourse which has yet been reported to us in Jerusalem, Jesus seems to have delivered without interruption that day: not, we may be certain, without an audience, but one most likely of an unpolished kind, the daily worshippers who never failed, with perhaps a greater leaven than usual of strangers and simple folk bound to no official maintenance of ritual and tradition. One can imagine the various committees of Sanhedrim occupied with the new wonder that had been brought before them, messengers running to and fro, one communication after another, and ever-new predictions to be taken to keep this fact from the knowledge of the multitude: while all the time an act more great, enunciation of the great truths of the Gospel went on undisturbed. Once more as always at Jerusalem it is our own great and unique mission, declared in the full terms, which our Lord explains to his hearers, without compromise or faltering. "I am the door of the sheep," by which alone they can enter the fold. "I am the good shepherd, I lay down my life for the sheep, I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment I have received of my Father." Such words as these had been already said privately to the Apostles on several occasions, but had been received with bewilderment and never understood until a little later when everything was accomplished. Now they were claimed in the most public place of Jerusalem, a mystery which was as plain as the daylight afterwards, but nothing but blasphemy.

All our Lord's addresses delivered at Jerusalem .

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And who can wonder that after the uninterrupted utterance of that Sabbath morning there should have been “a division among the Jews for these sayings”? Not long could that calm last. He who did not come to bring peace but a sword, in this special region, to that organisation which it was his mission to replace and transform if not to destroy, could not long be left to tell the wondrous tale of his own being and office undisturbed. Much he had said that was wonderful before, but never anything so wonderful as this. “Many of them said, he hath a devil and is mad”—what wonder? Take the words alone and they were more than madness, they were blasphemy, and the most tremendous assumption ever made by man. Yet those who looked upon him, who followed the discourse to its end and studied the speaker, knew that these were not the words of him that hath a devil, and that never man spake like this man. And evidently by this time the news of the last miracle had spread among the crowd and moved the baser sort, so that even the Pharisees had begun to ask: “Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?”

The Apostle pauses here to give a touch of local description. “It was winter, and Jesus walked in the Temple, in Solomon’s porch,” which is believed to have been the great cloister running along the eastern wall, which rested upon the vast vaults still existing called Solomon’s stables, and looked towards the Mount of Olives. Like the Greek philosophers, the Hebrew teachers walked under the sheltering portico surrounded by their disciples, and talked and taught and explained, the spectators about ever ready to suggest a doubt or ask a question. There no doubt it was that he had found the blind man in the morning in some sheltered corner, waiting for the alms of the passers-by, who, from love and the natural want

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utterance than this? And some of them were transported with rage and horror and took up stones to stone him. These missiles must have fallen from their hands when he turned upon them, ever calm, and asked for which of the works he had done they stoned him? an expression which looks as if they had actually begun to hurl at him the first pieces of marble or stone they could pick up, fragments of the perpetual reparation of the Temple. "For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy," they cry. And surely it was blasphemy, the most unhesitating, the most assured, blasphemy, which by no possible excuses could be explained away.

It is most curious that at the final trial when Jerusalem was ransacked to procure witnesses against Jesus, no one of the men who seized those stones in their rage, who heard him say "I and my Father are one," who listened, scarcely able to contain themselves, to his assertion that he could lay down his life and take it again, produced themselves to prove these manifest blasphemies. Had they become his followers? were they so shaken by the majestic truth in him that they dared not bear that witness which would have been conclusive? Certain it is that only some trumpery accusation about destroying the Temple to which nobody gave the least faith was brought against him: and the hearers of these extreme words were silent. It is one of the most remarkable secondary details in the history.

But he had now done all that was needful in his proclamation of his mission. He withdrew from amidst the gathering crowd. His time was not yet: there were still things to be done and things to be said which made him conclude this portion of his ministry summarily to avoid a premature end. If there was any-

him he was gone: and for a few months more he returned to the life of the wandering prophet and teacher, with this difference that he went to his own Galilee no

more

spared till the husbandman had dug about its roots and given it another chance for life: all short, all full of meaning, teaching their lesson with one vivid illustration from the common objects about. His more intimate intercourse with his disciples seems to have been chiefly directed to their encouragement and the strengthening of their faith and trust in time to come. He bids them to look at the birds twittering upon every bush, things of no account, yet not one of them forgotten before God. He bids them consider the lilies of the field which toil not nor spin, yet are arrayed as never was Solomon in all his glory: how much more value are they than the sparrows, how much more than the flowers? When they are brought before the magistrates and into the synagogues to answer for themselves, he bids them take no thought what they are to say. "For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in that same hour what ye ought to say." How troubled and perplexed they must have been as they listened, not knowing what he could mean, nor why it was necessary thus to comfort their hearts beforehand, as for some mysterious need yet to come: and how their excitement would be relieved yet disappointed when he turned aside and looked at the crowd behind and spoke his parable, leaving the germ of Divine story to quicken and fructify in the common soil, who may venture to describe? They could not shut their ears to the repeated references he made to something that was about to be accomplished at Jerusalem, which would make the next Passover a great era to them all: but, perhaps, in the dread anxiety and sense of approaching fate, would turn their faces from it, rather than confront that mysterious catastrophe of which no one could tell what it was to be.

bles, save in one or two cases, are shorter, more con-

him when need was, the alms of Godhead. Here was no wilderness to demand a miraculous meal, the thing of all others which had moved the multitude in Galilee: and it was only when human need appealed to him that the Divine arm was raised.

Yet were there some exceptions to this reserve, when the need did present itself. At the entrance of a certain village on the way there stood a miserable band of ten lepers, not approaching closely, as was forbidden to them, but standing afar off, moved by sudden hope as the rumour on the road that preceded him reached their ears. It is a sight that any traveller may see at this day in that unchanging East. I shall never forget the thrill of horror and pity and strange realisation as of a familiar scene, that moved my own mind at the first sight of that line of dark figures muffled and shrouded, yet letting a dreadful face or shapeless limb appear to demonstrate their wretchedness—seated upon the edge of the road outside a smiling village, with their cry of appeal to every passer-by and the rattle of their money-boxes. Just so these men, dark shadows with veiled faces in the evening sunshine, must have stood as he approached, clamouring for an alms more great than any coin. “Go, show yourselves to the priest,” was all he said, in a pause of his discourse: while probably the others that followed were seeking out what minute piece of money they could find to give to those most unhappy mendicants. The shout with which they must have started off on their hurried journey to fulfil that ceremonial necessity which stood between them and their return to life—scarcely pausing to see if the good news could be true, was, as the reader knows, interrupted by but one who, seeing, perhaps, his distorted hand take back some form of a human member

ing down upon his face gave thanks to his deliverer. Was it, perhaps, for the more utter conviction of James and John who had desired to call down fire from Heaven on the hostile village that our Lord paused to remark that this one grateful soul among so many, only eager to prove their emancipation, was a Samaritan ? and that the benevolent "neighbour" whose story he told them to point the moral of perfect charity was of that de-

had become weary by this time of those perpetual outcries of the multitude, or the cynical ingratitude of the lepers may have disgusted them—for those of them who were in advance rebuked the blind man for his ceaseless cry. Not so their Master, who heard no cry for mercy unmoved; and the train followed on to Jericho with the once-blind man following, surrounded, we may be sure,



JESUS ON THE ROAD TO JERICHO.—BY GRANTON, THAT OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

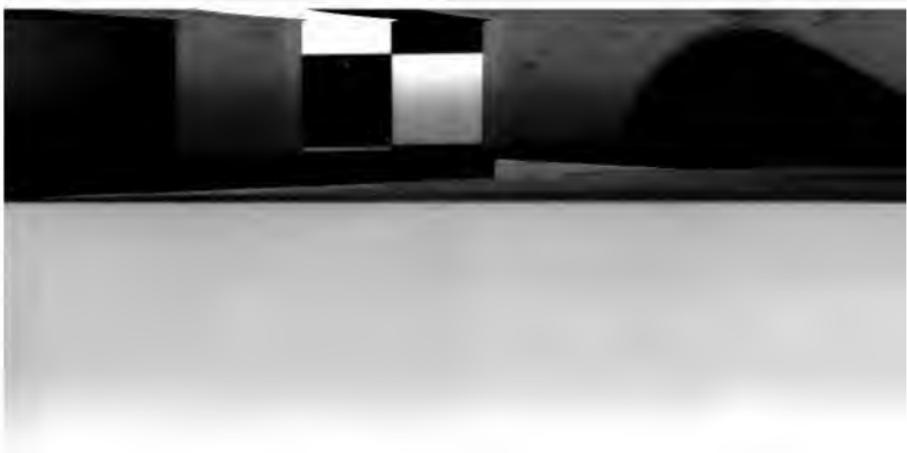
By this time he had come up to the road, straining his eyes to see the distance. He saw a figure whose benignant

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case of the young man at Nain, he had met the burial procession and seen the anguish of the mother, such anguish as, being there with that power in his hand, he could not pass by. But in this, every circumstance was full of meaning. He did not for once bestir himself at the first cry of the appeal, "he whom thou lovest is sick"; but remained quietly where he was "for two days," leaving the sickness to run its fatal course. Where he was at this time we are not distinctly told, except that it was beyond the bounds of Judea, and probably still on the other side of Jordan, to which he returned after his missionary journeys as for the moment his settled place of abode. When at the end of the two days he proposed to his disciples to go to Judea, he was surrounded at once by anxious remonstrances, "Master, the **Jews** of late sought to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?" This would seem to establish that there could have been no intermediate visit to Jerusalem, since that attempt to stone him is the last recorded. When they perceived that he would go, there is a tragic resignation in the tone of the disciples. "Let us also go that we may die with him," says Thomas, the sceptic, he who found it so hard to believe the deeper mysteries of the Gospel. Clearly he perceived what was personal and positive with



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JERICHO ROAD: TRADITIONAL SPOT WHERE THE MAN FELL AMONG THIEVES.



walk into the grateful quiet, the rustle of the corn and the soft shade of olive-trees. They were so much concerned, however, for their Master's safety, which was their chief thought, that anxiety for Lazarus seems to have held a very secondary place in their minds: and it is evident that they took their way with great reluctance towards the country in which his far more precious



JERICHO ROAD: TRADITIONAL SPOT WHERE THE MAN FELL AMONG THIEVES. *To face page A10.*

walk into the grateful quiet, the rustle of the corn and the soft shade of olive-trees. They were so much concerned, however, for their Master's safety, which was their chief thought, that anxiety for Lazarus seems to have held a very secondary place in their minds: and it is evident that they took their way with great reluctance towards the country in which his far more precious life was in danger.

desire," that is with all his heart, to accomplish those rites for the last time, and eat that common supper with his disciples, before fulfilling and abolishing the great typical sacrifice, it was essential that he should remain hidden and quiet until his hour had come; for by this time the factions of the Jews had thrown off all disguise, and the high priests had given orders that he was to be taken into custody wherever found. No doubt Jerusalem had been stirred to its depths by the last and greatest miracle which he had accomplished in that hurried and unexpected appearance between two periods of exile, when no one looked for him, appearing and disappearing again before any warrant or officer could be sent after him. And now absolute silence enveloped him around, for a few weeks perhaps—it could scarcely be more:—before the supreme moment came of the world's history,



## CHAPTER III.

THE END OF THE JEWISH DISPLACEMENT

he long centuries, dying away with every trifling generation that has given them birth: but nothing can ever obliterate the traces of that agony and passion, the great Sufferer upon the Cross, the shining figure of the Resurrection morning. What a mean and impoverished world would that be from which these recollections were driven! But such a condition is one which, happily, the mind cannot conceive, even the very assailants of these heavenly mysteries having their own minds and the atmosphere they breathe so permeated by them, that it is in the very strength of that breath of life that they sound their little trumpets against the influence which permits them to be.

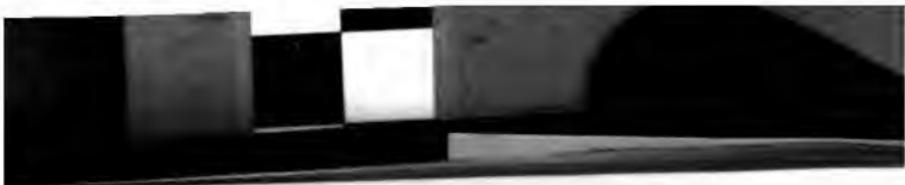
But here no controversy can stand, no criticism find place. Many martyrs have died, but none have done more than approach the crucified feet of him who died on Calvary; many great images have stood forth to men, heroes and prophets and kings, the creations of an inspiration little less than divine: but no poet has ever imagined and no history has ever produced any being so great, so noble, so pure, as to reach the level of the supreme and awful, the tender and familiar image of Love Incarnate. They group themselves around, behind him, at his feet, though they may not have known him, enveloped in a great humbleness, saying every one, We are unprofitable servants: while on his lips alone we feel it no blasphemy, we acknowledge it as of right that they should say, "I lay down my life, that I may take it again." What are miracles, the little rays of light that penetrate through the chinks of the cloud? He is the great Miracle whom no theory has ever explained. When there can be found in all the extended worlds which have been discovered since that day, in all the planets and systems which were but lights to rule the night in the

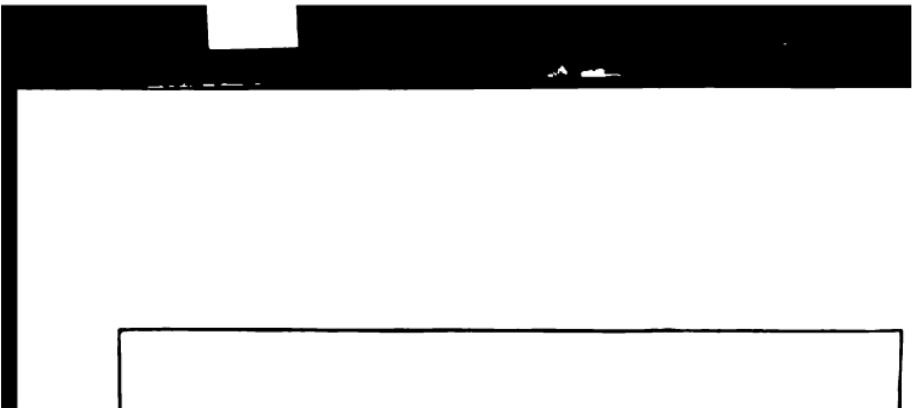
him—there may then be found a spot of ground on which to place the lever which will move the world:  
~~but not until then~~

doubt ringing still with the local glory of that miracle which is its distinction through all ages: and nothing can be more natural than that many should come to this entertainment not only to see Jesus, but Lazarus, the subject of that wonderful intervention. All the personages, indeed, of the great drama were there, along with the humble good man who says no word and makes no sign of personal identity, he who had lain four days in his grave in what wonderful suspense, or revelation of the mystery of death, there is not a word to tell us:

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which showing what it was to die  
Had surely added praise to praise."

It was not the purpose of the Redeemer that such a revelation should be—enough that in all mysteries we know him who is the solution of them all. And from Lazarus there comes no word, nor any indication what manner of man he was: "Lazarus was one of those that sat at the table with him"—a man known to the whole village and all the neighbours who crowded about, pointing out to the Sabbath day visitors from Jerusalem, the man who had died and was alive. And there was Martha, the kindly soul, serving; enough for her to follow her natural uses, to bring the bread and wine,





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hended them by the light of his own trouble, the menace of an end about to come might have made the defaulter more and more conscious of the winding up and the exposure before him. Something of this desperation, so familiar to the most common modern fashions of evil, must have stung him at the sight of that three hundred pence which was thrown away, and driven him out in exasperation to make his fatal bargain with the high priests; thus covering his own crime with a universal explosion, out of which he may have hoped the Master

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Jerusalem. Skirting quietly along the side of the hill without more thought probably than is always present in the mind of a traveller who enters at all into these sacred associations, we suddenly come round the corner of the winding path upon a sight which takes away the



SYRIAN CHILDREN WITH PALM BRANCHES.

breath—Jerusalem lying before us fully spread out in the sun with all her white domes and shining edifices, from the height of Zion to the steep slope of Moriah under the Temple wall, vaguely disappearing into dim-

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whatever may be the changes that have come on all around. He saw the Temple with its splendid cloisters crowning the plateau of that hill where we see only the exquisite little Moslem dome in its blue and white. But, nevertheless, as we do now our Lord paused and looked at Jerusalem. He saw what John, no doubt, saw through the glories of his after-vision, the white, shining, blessed place, like a bride arrayed for her husband. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that stonest the prophets." O city doomed, yet deathless! The glory of the white town expands and grows blurred and broken in the sight of the late-coming pilgrim, child of the modern ages, through eyes full of irrestrainable tears.

The entry into Jerusalem would thus be made in the happy tumult of the arriving crowd, with much joyful commotion such as accompanied the arrival of the pilgrims, thankful to reach the end of their journey, welcomed by many friends, and adding to the general tide of festivity and national solemnity which they had come to share. Perhaps it was the shield of this rural company pouring in to pay its vows, which gave that immunity which is so strange considering all that had gone before, to our Lord in his first reappearance, after the hot discussions that had arisen about him, and the orders to take him wherever he might be found which had already been given to the police of the Temple. According to the Gospel of St. Mark he confined himself on that first afternoon to visiting once more and "looking round" upon the courts and holy places, retiring to Bethany in the evening; and it was on the next day that, having furnished himself with "a scourge of small cords," he drove out the money-changers from their booths, and overturned the stalls of the dove-sellers, which occupied the court of the Gentiles, making

gossip and levity in the very entrance to the Father's house. There is no need for sacrifices now, but the crowd of petty merchants in the court of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—and even, not to go so far, about the precincts of every great Catholic cathedral—keeps



great profit—thus, with a cynical absence of precaution, sanctioning an abuse for which there was no excuse to be made.

beyond precedent, if not that it was true, what was his authority? was but going over a bygone question. And whether these might be new inquirers who had not heard that statement, whether they desired to elicit another declaration which they could use against him, it is equally evident that they neither ventured to object to what he had done, nor to fulfil the duty which would seem to have been almost demanded of them, and lay hold upon the man against whom the rulers had already issued their warrant. What instinctive terror or awe it was which caused their hesitation, whether it was concealed under the pretence of a design to collect further and further evidence against him, it is impossible to

ianded from one to another to show that effigy of Cæsar which furnished an infallible answer to the next cleverly constructed question? Should one pay tribute to Cæsar or not? the most subtle inquiry, calculated so certainly to embroil him with one side or another and bring him within the sway of the secular heathen tribunal, that secular arm to which exasperated Churchmen have always been so ready to appeal. We know what confusion awaited the askers of this question. Then came the gay and cultured scribes, with a problem at once scornful and profane. Whose wife should that woman be at the resurrection who had been married to one brother after another according to a painful provision of the Jewish law? The mystical refinements of religion with which we have to deal in the present day are in nothing more obstinate than in their absorption in this question of sex, which by some of them is forced on the unwilling listener with a pertinacity which does its best to make even religion indecent. The Master quenched this flaming firebrand with celestial calm and that authority which was "not as the scribes." He went farther even than the immediate matter, looking upon these sceptics, pretended teachers who soiled the spring from which they drew, with eyes more severe than his wont: and set forth that true doctrine of the resurrection, that everlasting germ of spiritual life, which the Jews had never expressed in their doctrine,<sup>1</sup> and which critics assert had never been revealed to them. What silence fell upon the breathless assembly when these few majestic words were said! "The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob," well-known title of daily use, the

<sup>1</sup> It may, however, be remarked that the Jews had no doctrine properly so called—no declaration of "I believe"; but only commands to be obeyed, the law, and prophecies to be honored in; no

very claim of the race to speial privileges and thei.  
only standing ground in the world. "He is not the God  
of the dead but of the living." What words were these,  
**silencing every vain speaker,** filling with awe the great  
Temple raised to the honour of tthat name, penetrating  
to the farthest verge of the national history—and  
unanswerable, beyond the reach of argument, leaving  
~~every historian dumb~~

Is it, one wonders, sheer ignorance of this Divine statement of faith that makes the not ill-mentioned philosophy of our days imagine the Service of Man to be a new revelation, superseding the service of God?

Even in those Temple courts, with all their factions, a better inspiration existed. "Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth," cries the speaker who had put the question, caught in his own trap, if trap there was—a candid and honest man among those fierce disputers. But for this voice of surprised approval the bands of objectors, the critics and opposing doctors, seem to have been silenced, not knowing what to say. And then Jesus in his turn became the questioner. They were dumb when he asked why David should call the Christ his Lord when he was his son, as when he asked them by what authority John had baptized? They could not and dared not reply. Thus the first scene in which he appeared in the Temple in the days of his childhood was repeated at the end of his earthly career: "both hearing and asking questions"—leaving his adversaries confounded from their own mouths, silenced, unable to say a word in reply.

In these points, so briefly told, filling one chapter only in the record, the fundamental question as to who he was and what was his work,—which was that on which the Jews professed themselves most anxious:—is settled with a fulness which they did not ask, and in a sense which, perhaps—dazzled and confused as they were, by a revelation which was too much for them—their minds were incapable of taking in. A kingdom which was spiritual, which had nothing to do with Caesar's kingdom, founded not upon conquest but upon a vast all-embracing love, the love of God, and of man: which held eternal allegiance, not to Hades and the

the God of the living; and which was the kingdom not of David only or David's son, but of the Lord and Master of David—such were the great final statements by which he explained himself, and placed the evidence of things not seen before their eyes. That they did not understand them we may well allow; that such knowledge was too wonderful to touch their rigid minds and the firmly fixed one-idea of the nation; that in this sense their eyes were holden that they could not see, and their ears that they could not hear. Yet they ought to have known and recognised what must have flashed upon a thousand simple minds like the sun in its shining, the higher meaning, the true sense of all their master's words,

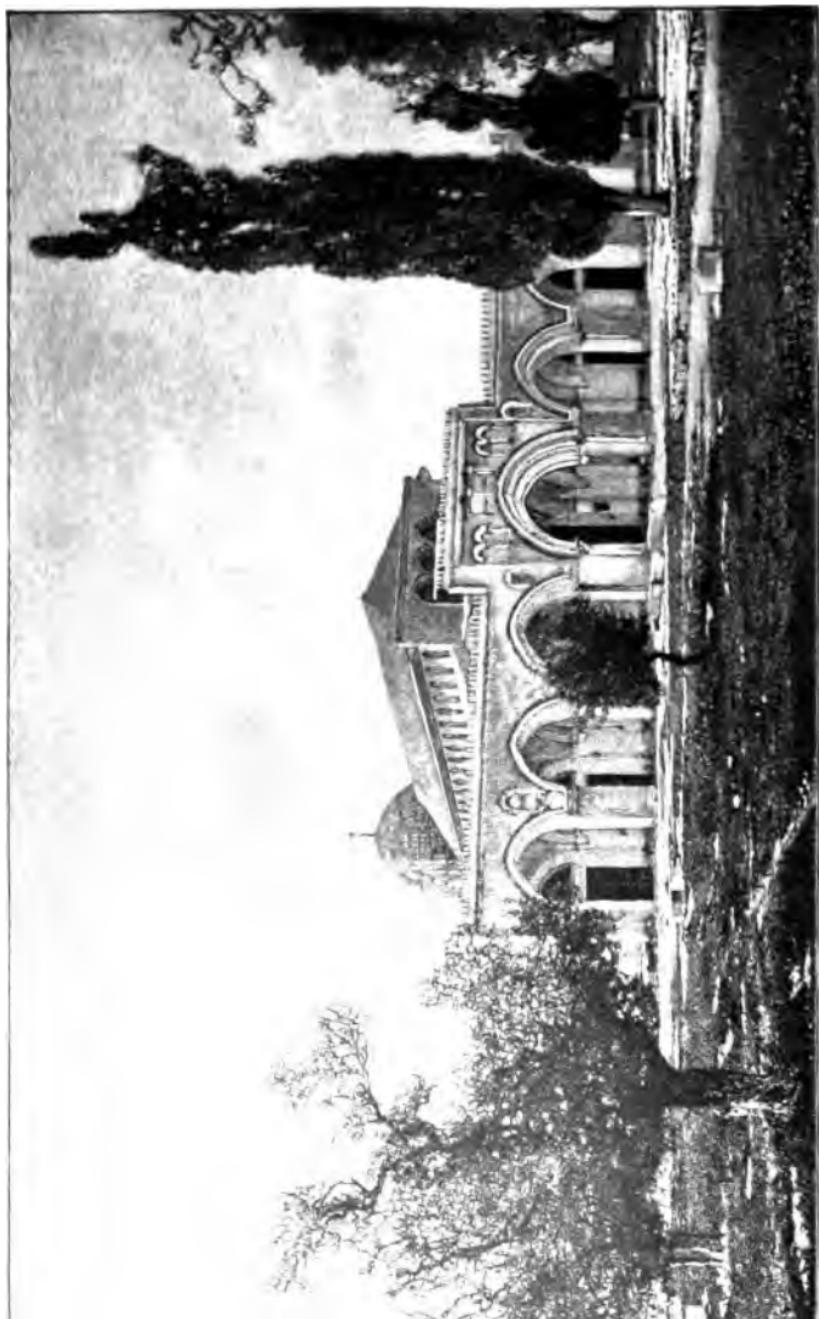
vere confounded in all their arguments, though the great constitution of the new spiritual world which their own had foreshadowed was placed before them, so that had they been faithful to their own inspiration they must have recognised it, they refused to do so. They must have turned away from that last question which cut the ground from under their feet, silenced, confounded, even paralysed; for not a finger was lifted against the bold speaker, he who had warned them that the kingdom was to be taken from them, and the stone which they had rejected to fall upon them and crush them to powder: and who now denounced them without disguise, "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!" as they stole away like a defeated army, leaving the eager multitude, and the disciples always circling him about: now triumphant, no doubt, though they too were little less dazzled and confused than the Pharisees, in their Master's victory over his enemies.

Nothing can exceed the strength and force of the denunciation that follows, poured forth in the very stronghold of their sway, and in the ears of many who no doubt would make haste to repeat to the ecclesiastical rulers of Judea, every word of that stern anathema. "Ye devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers. Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him tenfold more the child of hell than yourself. Ye fools and blind! Ye generation of vipers!" Never before nor after were those lips opened to utter the language of condemnation (not damnation even here, as in our translation, which was made when men did not mince matters and considered the eternal fire the most simple thing in the world—but judgment, and answer before a tribunal). He sat there in the midst of their very kingdom and named



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PLATE VI.—IN THE TEMPLE ENCLOSURE.



hypocrisy and pretended holiness which brought virtue itself into disrepute: yet not one of all the officials of the Temple interposed. It was well known that sentence had gone forth against him in the Sanhedrim, that orders had been given to arrest him whenever he appeared. Yet there he sat and discoursed, and set forth the dreadful indictment against these men who had virtually the power of life and death in their hands. Awe seems to have seized upon both masters and servants—the one shrank away confounded, baffled at every turn; the others must have hung about helpless, not knowing to whom to turn for their last orders, afraid of

owers did not remonstrate against this lingering is probably another indication of that excitement and confusion that was in the air, a bewilderment of all faculties, which prevented even those who loved him most from perceiving the risk of hanging about in the midst of danger. But he himself was not hurried, or anxious to escape. He must have paused and looked and noted what was pointed out to him, in the great sadness of what he knew to be his final effort. The day was over of possibility and hope—and now he could scarcely see those beautiful walls and domes standing strong under the level rays of the westerly sun, for pity of the terrible scene when they should be beaten down, so that not one stone should stand on another. When he left Jerusalem, and sat down to rest upon the way, which rounds the slope of the Mount of Olives, opposite the Temple, with his eyes upon the white and shining city, so peaceful outside, so full of every unchained demon of rage and blasphemy within, his countenance was still sorrowful with these thoughts. The disciples gathered round him eagerly yet full of awe, asking the explanation which he so often gave them. “When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming and of the end of the world?” That some dim perception of the approaching crisis of which they had been so often warned, and of his separation from them, they knew not how, had penetrated their minds is evident from this question, as it is also evident that they associated the destruction of Jerusalem with the end of the world.

There is an extraordinary pathos in the thought that our Lord himself in his renunciation of his divine greatness and acceptance of the lot of mankind, had consented to the destruction of the mortal state we find in the

tremendous events. On this great subject it is too daring

oints it out as the last. What more was there to be said? He had left no stone unturned to convince, no further exposition possible to make his mission clear. Patiently he had heard and replied to every problem his enemies had set before him, so that none could be in any further doubt as to what he meant. He had cried once more in the Temple in the midst of all "I am come a light into the world. He that believeth on me, believeth not on me but on him that sent me." Neither among the Pharisees nor among the multitude could any delusion be left concerning him, or at least concerning the office he claimed. No longer a prophet out of Nazareth, no longer the Son of David alone, but the Lord of David, the Light of the world. It cannot be maintained for a moment that he had left Jerusalem in any doubt. He was the Son of God, the promised Deliverer—or else his blasphemy was proved before all men. One thing or the other; God or an impostor; there is no midway.

And then it would seem there was a pause: making their way softly along the side of the hill, stopping to rest, watching the sun go down and all the meltings of the evening light sink over Jerusalem, continuing as strength permitted their way among the gnarled olives and the waving corn, the little band would reach the village where the lamps were being lighted and the table spread for the evening meal. Some commentators imagine that on this evening was the great supper at which Mary anointed her Lord for his burial, and Judas, exasperated, set out to contrive, with his Master's enemies how to surprise him when apart from the crowd. But that does not seem to be justified by the narrative of St. John. And for a day or two after silence falls upon the wonderful scene. St. Matthew records some of the most impressive of the mornings—that of the ten

been told to the village folk of Bethany, or the stragglers from Jerusalem who came out, as after a wonder, to hear what he would say: and to whom the description of those who said "Lord, Lord," but left all deeds of goodness unaccomplished, might well apply. But the courts of the Temple knew him no more.

It is strange to think what was going on there. "Many of the chief rulers believed on him," and these courts must again have echoed with questions—Where was he? Was he coming again? The Pharisees began again to encourage and stimulate each other to action, "Perceive ye not how ye prevail nothing; behold, the world is gone after him." They had not dared for fear

aiced character as the people of God, they, the children of Abraham? The rumour of such arguments might probably reach him in the quiet of the country in which he was, bringing ever nearer the inevitable catastrophe.

But that period of holy calm and intercourse, or else the immunity which he had enjoyed from all persecution in the recent days spent in the Temple, had so strengthened the disciples that none of the desperate devotion which made Thomas say, on an earlier occasion, "Let us go that we may die with him," is apparent in their demeanour now. The two who were, no doubt, the usual providers went into the city by his command to prepare for their Master, the night before the Passover, probably that all might be on the spot and ready to fulfil all righteousness on the next day—one of them, we must believe, being the guilty Judas with his terrible secret in his heart, attentive to note all arrangements, that he might betray the most favourable spot for his Master's arrest to those who had purchased his services. Our Lord directs them to the place as if it were one already selected by himself. Tradition, which, however, I fear is of little authority, fixes "the large upper room" as having been situated in the little group of buildings which surround what is called the tomb of David, and which lie on the southern side of Jerusalem, a little way outside the town. This may or may not have been; one point, however, in its favour, is that the little band would be able to go there descending from the hillside road straight down into the valley of Hinnom, and by the heights and hollows outside the wall without attracting observation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The pilgrim of the present day will find at the same period of the year the lower part of this building full of picturesque wild parties of Moslem visitors, each in their corner, come up like the

Into the narrative of that holy feast it would be a

Peter who it was? and there seems to have arisen a pained inquiry among the rest, each one echoing his neighbour, scarcely understanding perhaps what the question meant, "Is it I?" Perhaps it was generally supposed among the party to be some commission to be executed, or at least something vague in the future like Peter's after burst of assurance, that in no circumstances could he deny his Lord; and the piece of bread which was given to the traitor would be but a sign of the Master's usual tender courtesy to the one among them who had to leave the table on his administrative business before the others. That they could have divined what he was to do quickly is impossible, else hasty Peter would certainly have stopped his goings for ever, before even the Lord could interfere.

There is a haze over them all as of the very dazzle and confusion of a great crisis uncomprehended, during the whole of that extraordinary scene. Its wonderful preface and accessories:—the washing of feet—strange and touching lesson in the midst of those contentions who should be greatest that seem to have continued up to this very climax—and the discourses that follow: are all full of this strained and troubled tension of human faculty, labouring at its utmost after the Divine, and breaking into an almost childishness of remark and question in its inability to catch the thread of meaning. While he speaks, more certainly now than ever before, "as never man spake"—they follow him like blind men at a distance, murmuring strange questions confusedly in the midst of his divine words: "Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?" "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" "What is this that he saith unto us

all seem like the expressions of listeners, addressed as if it were in an unknown tongue, straining every power to follow, feeling themselves swept into a great current which they can neither stem nor understand, and in the flood of which they catch at anything that may arrest the tide for a moment, or help them to standing ground. Nor is the utterance of their dazed satisfaction at the end less remarkable, "Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no parable. Now we are sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we believe that thou camest forth from God." Strange words of weakness, utterly overpowered by the weight of a glory which was too much for them.

the rains were over, with the Paschal moon clouded in the sky, and everything hushed and sanctified in the coolness of the night, that they listened with heads bowed and hearts full of awe and wonder, to the ineffable majestic words of that prayer, wonderful communing of God with God, which the silenced atmosphere of earth



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**THE FINAL TRAGEDY.**

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their silvery leaves in the shining of the moon. At that

nguish unspeakable which sympathy could not share, nor love help; "Father, if it be possible: all things are possible unto Thee." He had bidden the disciples when he left them to pray that they should not enter into temptation: but he himself had all the brunt of the most terrible of temptations to bear. It was not enough that he should soar above the human as when he said, "Father, I will": the strain, the stress, the conflict, must be his as it was theirs of whom he was the representative. "Sore amazed and very heavy"—restless, going and coming to see, perhaps, if any cared, if there was one to stand by him: and there was none: not even of those who loved him most, not for one hour. "Simon, sleepest thou?" Peter was the strongest, the most eager to go with him through everything—and yet he could not watch one hour. There was never a picture so terrible, so wonderful, so natural—the going back again and again, the same words almost as if in the depths of his anguish the human weakness of repetition, was all that he was capable of: very man, bearing upon him the burden of the conditions of that race from which he would not liberate himself till the last.

The coming of the darkling procession among the trees, in the depths of the valley: the sudden flare of a torch or two: the momentary tumult when Peter, dazed, starting from his sleep, snatched at the sword which in piteous uncomprehension he had brought with him from the chamber of the supper, and struck a hasty blow with it in the darkness and dazzle of confusing light: the one calm presence dominating all, stopping that clamour with a word, healing with a touch the wound which was so needless: the circle of the dark multitude round, confused in the moonlight: the Temple police half exultant, half afraid, surrounding their prisoner with

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elf when a suspicious doorkeeper pushed him aside with a hasty accusation "Thou also wert with him"—"I know not the man!"

How can we explain this defection, this astonishing failure of the heart? Even when he heard the cock crow, and conviction came upon Peter: when the Lord from the other side of the hall turned his head and looked at him,—was it with a smile at the speedy realisation of his own warning? with nothing but the reproach of love we may be sure:—the rough Galilean good for nothing but to die at his feet, we might suppose, not surely to revolutionise a world—did not break through the circle of staves and spears and fling himself on the ground before his Master, to share whatever might befall him, as many a lesser man has done:—but went out into that terrible dawn, in the chill opening of that awful day, weeping, struggling with himself, rather in the collapse of despair than with any burst of devotion. To turn his back upon it, to try to ignore it, to cry aloud to God, negligent and unheeding, for those ten legions of angels who could change everything in a moment, but whom the Master would not ask for: was this all there remained to do? Did the city sleep unthinking, when Peter burst forth into its streets, or was it waking early to the preparation for the Passover, and beginning to hear by flying rumours, always awake like care before the race of mankind—that Jesus of Nazareth had been seized, that he was before the judges, and that no one could tell what wonderful thing might happen that day?

The town was full of strangers and pilgrims, lying down to snatch their night's rest in every corner, in every khan and guest-chamber, and stirring early because of the discomfort and crowding of their accommodation





this new excitement thrown into it must have thrilled the restless city from end to end. The prisoner before the Sanhedrim, the charge of blasphemy, the eager

But Jerusalem all surging about that terrible scene is more within the range of the modern writer. I have little doubt that the many-coloured crowd which throngs every street at the present day—when the little population of the city is swamped in the multitude of pilgrims, Christians to keep the Easter feast, Jews to keep the Passover, jealous Moslems to keep the peace, and make their own fictitious celebration at the grave of Moses—resembles much more, perhaps, than any other modern crowd resembles one of two thousand years ago, the influx into Jerusalem at that great and memorable Passover. Going along the line of street which is known now as the Via Dolorosa, on the Good Friday of 1890, it was impossible not to feel that just so must the surging masses have closed upon that fatal procession, the soldiers clearing the way, the wondering spectators gazing over each others' shoulders, pressing upon the sufferer, as he made his way up the toilsome steep, his bodily frame worn with the night's vigil, the exhaustion of the garden and all the farewell scenes neutralised by no hour of rest, no moment of quiet: while **every** new street and lane poured forth its spectators to gaze at him, and the hoarse shouts of the multitude rang in his ears, and the jibes of the mocking Romans and their scornful laughter at the Jew criminal and his Jew persecutors alike, rose through the tumult. Not that tears were wanting even then. “A great company of people and of women which also bewailed and lamented him.” Not all were joined in that hoarse shout of “Crucify him!” The mocking and the laughter and the cruel cries were broken by that wail of which alone he took any notice. And so the dreadful procession toiled by. Steep and rough as those streets are now, they must have been still more steep with their pavement of great stones and





ago. In the heat of the midday, amid the pressure of the crowd, carrying that heavy weight under which a weary frame exhausted by sleepless nights and laborious days wavered and fell: with all that tumult sweeping round and the anguish at the end which was more than martyrdom: our Lord made his final passage through those streets of Jerusalem, in which he had done no violence neither had deceit been found in his mouth: in which he had put forth his hand so often to heal and

errible tragedy, the pierced side, the offered sponge: here the great darkness that quenched both sun and day would come over a vast horizon as if the whole world was filled by it: and there would be room for all the passers-by to pause and gaze, and for priests and fierce Pharisees to stand around and utter that wonderful confession, more profound than Peter's, more all-expressive in its enmity than the warmest utterance of enthusiasm or faith, the very warrant and seal of earth put to the act of salvation: "He saved others; himself he cannot save": unconscious testimony never to be gainsaid! the witness through all the ages, of hate to love.

And low in the side of the hill is a tomb,<sup>1</sup> cut in the rock like all the tombs of Judea: not now a new grave —centuries old, dark with age and the filling up of the soil, yet still distinct, with its shelf, its couch of stone, place made for the last reliques of mortality yet never finished, one rocky bed and one alone, having been occupied:—"in a garden" wild with uncultivated herbage, yet not altogether without trace of its ancient use. Was this Joseph's tomb, the place where the watch was set, to which the women came in the morning, where the angels sat, and the sun of the resurrection shone? This will probably never be certainly known until we meet in another state the witnesses of that event, and trace with them every hallowed spot, if such an indulgence of human feeling may be dreamed of. But the thought that it may have been so is one to make the heart swell, and the tears rise, as the pilgrim stands alone in the silence outside the city, disturbed by no clamour of contending creeds, with only heaven over him, no scent

<sup>1</sup>The description and model of this tomb, so extraordinarily carrying out all that the tomb of our Lord must have been, and

of incense or glare of lights, but the fragrance of growing grass, and the sight of the sun. There is no room for human memories in that spot where the greatest of earthly events took place: yet the strained human soul moved to its depths may be permitted to turn aside with a pang of gladness, to think that this grave was discovered in the bowels of the earth with all its solemn possibilities, by General Gordon, a tender reward and grace from heaven, almost a sign of intimate sacred friendship and favour, to that true servant, and brother and follower  
*of the Lord.*

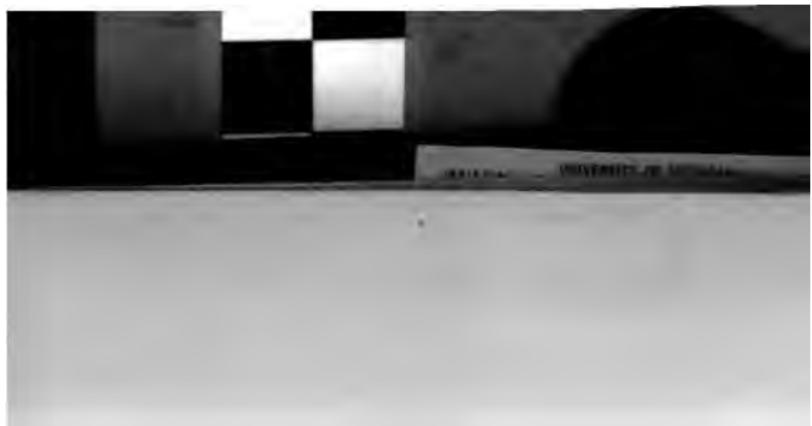
When that great act was accomplished, the story of Jerusalem, the chosen city, came to an end. Through all the vicissitudes of mortal life it had survived, with tenacity and obstinate persistence when cities much greater mouldered into dust. Besieged, conquered, burned, emptied of its population, trodden into dust, it had risen again time after time, its walls and its shrines ever renewed, its unchangeable traditions carried on. Internal dissensions had raged in it, its sanctuary had been desecrated again and again, its little kingdom torn to pieces, its free-born children carried into captivity. Through tragedy within and conquest without, and fire and convulsion it had still continued, renewing its youth like the eagle. But now its hour had come, and the use for which it had been preserved was accomplished. The brief and awful Passion of the city followed the **Passion** of him whom she had rejected in about thirty-two years. And if the fiercest stand of resistance that, perhaps, ever was made, the most desperate and tragic valour, could in any way atone for the cruelty and falsehood of previous history, then the Jews in that last act of their national history might be partially forgiven—were it not that treachery and cruelty still accompanied them in the heroism of that terrible struggle. Finally the fears of the high priests were realised; the Romans took away both their place and people; and for some centuries it appeared that at last the race, the sacred places, the memories and traditions of the city of David, and the Mount of Zion, had been stamped out for ever. So had thought the Assyrians five hundred years before; but their captives had become again a nation, and long outlived the race that carried them off in chains and weeping. The destruction made by the Romans was still more complete. *A vein and stone was not left upon*

defended; again its people, so many as remained, were driven like chaff before the wind: but all that had happened before, and only marked an era in the history. Now, however, the blow was final, the annals of the city were closed, and all its emblems and its types fulfilled. Everything in the strange and impressive silence which now fell over it, marked the accomplishment of this unalterable sentence. An awe of something more terrible than ruin enveloped the plateau upon the little hill, so that even Rome herself withdrew trembling from any attempt to disturb its ashes. The old order had changed, giving place to new. History and hope all accomplished, all misunderstood, ceased in the spot which had

yet that the city should remain in the possession of the wild Ishmaelite, the enthusiast of the desert, are all acts so strange and so unparalleled that we can but feel the mystery of the future which is involved in them to be dimly shadowing underneath, as the mysteries of the past are all involved in the wonderful tale. When the traveller comes round the slope of Olivet and sees suddenly before his eyes lying white in the sunshine the holy city over which our Lord wept:—the sacred hill covered with shrines in which his name is not named save in the potent inference of that denial, inscribed around the Dome of the Mahomedan, which in its very assertion that there is no Son of God suggests to all ignorant yet intelligent souls that he must exist who is thus so defiantly and solemnly denied:—with the closed and built-up gate below through which those who thus deny him believe that he is one day to ride triumphant into the ancient home of his name: the mystery and wonder and hope of that future comes upon the gazing pilgrim in a silent rapture of indescribable emotion. For a thousand years and more the hearts of Hebrew poets and prophets so swelled and rose at thought of him who was to come, the Son of David, the King of Israel, the Prince of Peace—an event which they understood as little as we understand any Second Coming. And my heart, I own, acknowledges a fond superstition before the closed arches of that Golden Gate. The old, old trees of Gethsemane lie beyond in the valley, the little brook he crossed so often still gathers a little rivulet from the rains. Shall he one day come again and enter from the valley of his deep humiliation to the lofty courts of his Father's house? Who can tell? It is the superstition of those who have written upon their most sacred shrine that there is no Son of God, it is not ours:

that might be! The prophet upon this very hill may have stood and gazed and pondered what manner of man that should be whom he himself had described so minutely, he who was to come as a lamb to the slaughter, the rejected and despised of men.





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